

# SONGS WITHOUT MUSIC

RHYMES AND RECITATIONS



HAMILTON AÏDÉ







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BY

HAMILTON AÏDÉ  
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MOST of the verses collected in this volume have been printed at various times, and in sundry ways, during the last twenty years. About one-third of the songs are new. The rest have been published with music; and, of these, many have become popular.

This is my excuse for gathering together lyrics, the chief merit of which is that they are more *singable* than perhaps better poetry sometimes is; and that they have been loved, and sung by lips that will sing no more.

Of the recitations, it is enough to say that they are not meant to be read *in silence*. They were written with a special intention, and demand the interpretation of the human voice. Most of the other poems appeared many years ago in a volume which is now out of print.



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SONGS WITHOUT MUSIC.



## LOVED AND LOST.

I TOOK a lute that was shattered,  
And tried to make music true ;  
I took the leaves that were scattered,  
And tried to make roses new.  
I took up a vase that was broken,  
And tried to fill it again ;  
I took up my first love-token,  
And tried to re-forged the chain.  
But the high, pure trust that I gave you,  
What art in this world can restore ?  
I would give up my life to save you,—  
But faith can return no more.

1880.



“WOULD THAT LOVE.”

I.

WOULD that Love would bear my love  
 In his arms away,  
 To some green and pleasant place  
 Far from heat of day,  
 And that ever, in that shade,  
 At her feet I lay !

II.

Would that Love would bear my love  
 Far from world's desire,  
 Far from thirst of gold, whose flame  
 Scorcheth worse than fire,—  
 Mounting on his wide-spread wings  
 Higher, ever higher !

III.

Would that Love would bear my love  
 To that perfect land,  
 Where no other throne than his  
 Can enduring stand !  
 Love and I would live there happy  
 Clasping hand in hand.

## SOLDIERS' SONG.

## I.

WE marched, at morning, through the streets,  
A thousand men, and more ;  
The birds sang not so blithe as we,  
Along the river shore.  
We were marching away,  
With hope and courage high,  
For honour and for Fatherland,  
To conquer or to die.

## II.

We marched at noon across the plain,  
With hearts undaunted still,  
Though, twice our force, the foeman stood  
Against us on the hill.  
We were marching away—  
With hope and courage high,  
For honour and for Fatherland  
To conquer or to die.

## III.

We homeward marched at night-time—  
A hundred men—no more—  
And with the shouts of victory, rose  
A wailing by the shore.—  
Of those who'd marched away  
Nine hundred men were slain,  
But for honour and for Fatherland,  
We'd do the same again !

## A NILE-SONG.

## I.

I SAT with my Egyptian maid,  
Down by the river, in the shade :  
The red moon, with her half-shut eye,  
Upon the glassy stream, hard by,  
Among the lotus-flowers played  
Dreamily.

## II.

Through her dark hair, I wound the slips  
Of lotus, with my finger-tips.  
Gold earrings tinkled on my breast,  
Our kisses kept the silence best,  
Love laid his finger on our lips,  
Dreamily.



## A FRAGMENT—FOR MUSIC.

*The musician is alone at night. He opens his lattice,  
and soliloquises in the star-light.*

WE call night peaceful ; yet, how fiercely burn  
The myriad stars above ! Are *they* at peace,  
Amid the war of winds, the crash of clouds ?  
I think that, rather, could we hear the burthen  
Of their great chorus, 'twould be unfulfilled  
Desire, expectancy, unrest. To me  
Heaven's harmonies are complicate as life . . .  
Of which we have not the solution yet.

*He takes up his lute and striking a few chords, sings.*

## I.

O unknown worlds above !  
What fiery hate and love  
Flash from your eyes, like passionate human tears !  
Shall all our bitter strife,  
When we have done with life,  
Be expiated in your burning spheres ?

## II.

Shall we, poor spirits, wander  
In purgatory yonder,  
Waiting for that yet-unseen isle of peace,  
When, cleansed from sin and stainless,  
We shall be wafted painless  
To the great End, where tribulations cease ?

## III.

Stars lying in God's hand,  
We know ye were not planned  
Merely to light men on their midnight way:  
Shine on, ye fiery stars !  
It may be, through your bars  
We shall pass upwards, to Eternal Day.

1881.



## WINTER IS PAST.

WINTER is past, Love ; again the stream flows ;  
 We two are met who have sorrowed apart ;  
 For each thorn of winter, we'll pluck a spring-rose,  
 Life of my life, my Love, Heart of my heart !

Spring-time rejoicing, the little birds burn  
 Crimson with love in the arms of the woods ;  
 Night hath been long, but now day will return,  
 Wealth of my wealth, my Love, Best of my Goods !

Birds sing already, as though it were June,  
 Sorrow and snows are both melted away :  
 Lift up thy voice—let us sing the same tune,  
 Life of my life, my Love, Queen of my May !



## SHEPHERD OF ISRAEL.

## I.

SHEPHERD of Israel, watching thy fold at night,  
 Up on the hills, over deep Galilee,  
 Thou never slumberest, Thou hast beheld thy flock  
 Breaking away from the fold, and from Thee.  
 Little they reckon of the perils before them ;  
 Down by that slippery path to the deep—  
 Lift up thy voice in the darkness, and call to them,  
 Thou who hast laid down Thy life for the sheep !

## II.

Shepherd of Israel, follow those wanderers,  
 Take back the little lambs home in Thine arms ;  
 Pity the stubborn ones, torn in the brambles,  
 Show them their error, and soothe their alarms.  
 Each one has fancied his way was the right one—  
 —Madly possessed, down that precipice steep  
 Let them not rush, like the swine, to destruction,  
 Thou who hast laid down Thy life for the sheep !

## III.

Shepherd of Israel, haste to deliver them ;  
 Dawn is now breaking o'er deep Galilee ;  
 Darkness deluded them, day will discover them  
 Far from their fold on the mountain, and Thee.  
 Is not that fold very broad, if they knew it . . ?  
 Made to encompass the strong and the small ?  
 Oh, lead them home, with Thy voice to those pastures,  
 Thou who hast laid down Thy life for them all !

## SLEEP.

**I**N the still time of sleep  
 I dream of thee ;  
 Like stars, so far, so bright,  
 Thine eyes shine through the night  
 Adown, on me.

The voices of my sleep  
 Out-sing all birds ;  
 Breathing continuous streams  
 Of music in my dreams,—  
 Thy parting words !

There entereth in that world  
 Nor grief, nor ill :  
 I hold thee to my heart ;  
 Thou can'st not then depart,  
 But lie there still.

From the deep peace of sleep  
 At morn I rise,  
 For thee to toil and fight,  
 Then sheathe the sword at night,  
 And close my eyes.

## DESOLATION.

WINTERY day, cold and grey,  
As my heart in this chill place;  
Will no wind, blithe and kind,  
Waft a smile into thy face?

Drops of rain, like dull pain,  
Throb upon the heavy air,  
Growing thick, beating quick,  
With the pulse of a despair.

All about,—within, without,  
Creeps the blank and cheerless grey :  
O for One, like the sun,  
Who should drive these clouds away!



## A WALK AND A WORD.

DO you recall our woodland walk,  
After the passing showers of rain ?  
The soft sand underneath our tread,  
The wind that shook the boughs o'erhead,  
And brought a moment's shower again ?

The whisper'd secrets of the leaves,—  
The silent listening air below,—  
The cheerful voice of some far bird,  
High up among the branches heard,—  
The little stream's untiring flow ? . . .

Do you recall some transient words  
That sank deep in my heart that day ?  
We count the Past with words like these,  
As circles mark the growth of trees,  
Which time can never wear away.



## WESTERN WINDS.

## I.

BLOW, western winds, around my father's door;  
 Blow softly : snap not the o'erladen stalks :  
 Drift the red leaf through casements to the floor ;  
 And warmly whistle down the laurel walks.

## II.

Blow as that evening when I last beheld  
 The elm trees answer to your rustling call,—  
 The apron flutter which my Phillis held,  
 Shaking the peaches from the garden wall.

## III.

Blow round the memory of my home and her,—  
 The budding passions of our June and May,—  
 O richer far than frankincense or myrrh,  
 Remains the odour of its new-mown hay.



OH, LET ME DREAM.<sup>1</sup>

OH ! let me dream of happy days gone by,  
 Forgetting sorrows that have come between,  
 As sunlight gilds some distant summit high,  
 And leaves the valleys dark that intervene.  
 The phantoms of remorse that haunt  
 The soul, are laid beneath that spell ;  
 As, in the music of a chaunt  
 Is lost the tolling of a bell.  
 Oh ! let me dream of happy days gone by, &c.

In youth, we plucked full many a flower that died,  
 Dropped on the pathway, as we danced along ;  
 And now, we cherish each poor leaflet dried  
 In pages which to that dear past belong.  
 With sad crushed hearts they yet retain  
 Some semblance of their glories fled ;  
 Like us, whose lineaments remain,  
 When all the fires of life are dead.  
 Oh ! let me dream, &c.

<sup>1</sup> From "A Nine Days' Wonder."



## BROWN EYES OR BLUE EYES.

## I.

BROWN eyes, or blue eyes, hazel or grey,  
 What are the eyes that I drink to, to-day?  
 Some seem to mock at us, some seem to frown—  
 Some, when we talk, cast their drooping lids down.  
 No matter their colour, I drink to the eyes  
 That weep when I weep, when I laugh laugh replies !

## II.

Merry or scornful, angry or kind,  
 I love every mood, so the eyes be not blind !  
 For man's mood is changeful, and what should he do,  
 If woman's, in sympathy, did not change too ?  
 No matter their colour, I drink to the eyes  
 That weep when I weep, when I laugh laugh replies !

## III.

Brown eyes, or grey eyes, hazel or blue,  
 We watch for them, live for them, die for them, too !  
 Stars of our morning, sunbeams through life,  
 Beacons in darkness, and danger, and strife.  
 No matter their colour, I drink to the eyes  
 That weep when I weep, when I laugh laugh replies !

SPANISH BOAT SONG.<sup>1</sup>

## I.

O H, pleasant 'tis, when morn looks grey  
 On the river sea-ward creeping,  
 To lie and float in a little boat,  
 And watch the fishes leaping.  
 Hoai ! hoai ! the boatmen cry,  
 As they drag the gleaming river,  
 Our net is long, our arms are strong,  
 Our boat's on the Guadalquiver !  
 Andalusia ! Andalusia !  
 What land so fair  
 That can compare  
 With Andalusia !

## II.

And pleasant 'tis, when evening calls  
 To the west wind over the water,  
 To serenade a dark-eyed maid,  
 With the song my lips have taught her.  
 Hoai ! hoai ! the boatmen cry,  
 As they pull up the golden river,  
 The sun's in the west, we'll hie to rest,  
 On the banks of the Guadalquiver !  
 Andalusia, &c.

<sup>1</sup> From " Philip."

## III.

But best it is to know, when all  
The world is calmly sleeping,  
Her watch for me, by the citron-tree,  
My dark-eyed maid is keeping.  
Hoi ! hoi ! that boatman's cry,  
She will never forget it, never !—  
When heard, that strain will recall again  
Old days by the Guadalquiver.  
Andalusia, &c.



## THE LINDEN WALTZ.

## I.

THE old waltz by the linden trees  
 Is wafted on the evening breeze.  
 How many memories it brings  
 Of long-departed things !  
 I see the blind old fiddler stand  
 Among the merry, youthful band :  
 I watch them dance ; before mine eyes  
 Again the joyous groups arise.  
 Floating with pleasure,  
 Unto that measure,  
 While the day's azure  
     Grows purple and gold.  
 Dear little couples make  
 Merry beside the lake,  
 And with their laughter wake  
     Echoes untold !  
         The old waltz, &c.

## II.

The dancers 'neath those linden trees  
 Are severed now by land and seas :  
 And nothing of the past remains,  
 Except those joyous strains !  
 Blithe-hearted then, in youth's gay spring,  
 Like birds from branch to branch that sing,

*THE LINDEN WALTZ.*

We build us nests in fancy, high  
Above the world, and near the sky !  
Dance on for ever !  
In my dreams never  
Shall aught dis sever  
    The groups that arise ;  
Ere future sorrow  
Bade the heart borrow  
Care from to-morrow  
    To dim our eyes.  
        The old waltz, &c.



## THE CHOICE.

## I.

WOULD'ST thou rather have a kingdom, and a  
 castle by the sea,  
 Far from all that thou hast cared for, far from all who  
 care for thee,  
 Than see at night the eyes thou lov'st, smile by a cottage  
 fire,  
 And know thyself enthronèd there, the Queen of his  
 desire ?

## II.

Would'st thou wear a broidered garment, with a  
 golden ring and crown,  
 And no warm human love to stir the heart beneath  
 the gown,  
 Or feel it beating with the pulse o' the purest joy here  
 known,  
 Beneath a russet kirtle, and a wedding-ring thine own ?

## III.

It is thine to choose thy bird to-day, the eagle or the  
 dove—  
 The broad wing of ambition, or the lowly flight of  
 love :  
 It is thine to choose thy lot to-day ; consider thy reply.—  
 The Angels will record thy words through all eternity !

CHLOE.<sup>1</sup>

CHLOE sat beside the river,  
 Sighing to the murmuring reeds,  
 "Love has wander'd off for ever,  
 Far, and farther he recedes!"  
 Maidens, weep for poor young Chloe!  
 Scorned she Love, when blithe and gay:  
 Vengeful Cupid heard her; so he  
 Punishes the Maid to-day.

Chloe was beloved by Damon,  
 Straight and proud she bore her head,  
 Now the tree he carved her name on  
 Bears another name instead!  
 Maidens, weep for poor young Chloe!  
 She, who will not when she may,  
 Angers vengeful Cupid; so he  
 Punishes the maid to-day!

<sup>1</sup> From "Widows Bewitched."



## IN AUTUMN.

I WALK'D beneath the branches tall,  
 Where we were wont to meet :  
 Alone, I saw the red leaves fall  
 In silence at my feet.  
 But barest bough the April hours  
 Make glad with joys of Spring,—  
 Only to hearts bereaved no show'rs  
 The leaves again can bring.

I hear his voice, his very words,—  
 His musical 'good-day,'  
 Out-singing all the song of birds,  
 And waters on their way.  
 And yet I know beneath his feet,  
 The bracken will not bend,  
 And, face to face, we shall not meet,  
 Till sorrow here shall end !



## DANCE ON, MAIDEN.

DANCE on, Maiden, high up on the hill,  
 Fresh as at daybreak, unwearied still;  
 Dimpling the grass with thy dainty feet,  
 As the wave is rippled by seagulls fleet.  
 What a spirit there is in those proud young arms  
 Tossing the hair back that shadows thy charms!  
 —The only shadow across thy brow.  
 O would I could dance as light-hearted as thou !

Dance on, Maiden, for who can say  
 Thou ever wilt dance—as thou dost to-day?  
 Thy cithern may break, or thy heart may discover  
 A tune it loves better—the voice of a lover !  
 But now thou know'st nothing of passion or sorrow,  
 Thy heart's in thy feet—will it be there to-morrow?  
 Then dance while it beats to that light measure now.  
 O would I could dance as light-hearted as thou !



## SONGS OF MOTHER AND FATHER.

## I.

## BABE, GOOD-NIGHT.

## I.

BABE, good-night ! and with the flowers  
 Close thine eyes to earthly things,  
 Heav'n, where thou so lately dwelled'st,  
 Wide each golden window flings.

## II.

Through the gate thou passest boldly,  
 Which we should approach with fear :  
 In that seraph-world, it may be,  
 Thou art more at home than here.

## III.

Dost thou join the angel-choir ? . . .  
 Meet thy playmates in the sky ?  
 Do we seem to thee but shadows—  
 Shadows of the things on high ?

## IV.

Howsoe'er it may be, darling,  
 Dream until the dawn of blue ;  
 Like a rose thy thoughts are folded,  
 They shall wake refresh'd with dew.

## II.

## BABY'S GROWTH.

BABY, mine no longer,  
 Shooting straight and tall,  
 Growing hourly stronger,  
 Scorning now to crawl,  
 With the help of mother's finger,  
 Or along the wall ;

Soon will mother's boy, Baby,  
 Heed her not, they say ;  
 But like a broken toy, Baby,  
 Cast her not away.  
 Ever think of her as something  
 Useful in its day.

Little rosy fingers  
 Claspt round mother's throat,  
 How their touch still lingers,  
 And the first sweet note  
 Of thy voice, that on the darken'd  
 Silent room did float !

In my open palm, child,  
 Stood two tiny shoes ;  
 Almost doth my arm, child,  
 Now thy weight refuse.  
 Every day some portion of thee,  
 Growing large, I lose.

Thou must climb the hill-top,  
Be it bare or green—  
Both the good and ill crop ;  
Learn to choose between,—  
While with folded hands in prayer  
At the foot I lean.

Man's ignorance they say, child,  
Is not his innocence,  
And thou must fight thy way, child,  
Onward, upward hence,  
Through a world where mother's arm  
Is helpless for defence.

Knowledge will be bought there,  
But something must thou lose,  
And O ! a loving thought ne'er  
To those days refuse,  
When thy mother's open palm  
Held those tiny shoes !



## III.

## FATHER'S LULLABY.

**L**IE at peace, my little one,  
 Let no fears alarm thee,  
 Lie at rest on Father's breast,  
 Nothing there shall harm thee ;  
 Mother to her home is gone,  
 To her home beyond the sea ;  
 She hath left me here alone,  
 Baby, with no nurse but me.  
 Hush ! Lie still my little one !

Though my voice, O little one,  
 Knows no soothing measure,  
 Yet my arm can shield from harm  
 Mother's parting treasure.  
 Till we there together meet  
 In that home beyond the sea,  
 Something she hath left me, Sweet,  
 Baby still remains with me.  
 Hush ! Lie still my little one !



## IV.

## THE PICTURE BOOK.

## I.

A CHILD look'd up to his father's smile ;  
 "What do the pictures say?"  
 "If my little boy will listen awhile,  
 A meaning all have they.  
 This is a soldier, stout and bold,  
 With his scarlet coat, all laced with gold :  
 He will never desert his colours, and fly.—  
 Will my boy be a soldier, by-and-by?"

## II.

"This is a sailor, honest and brave,  
 Whose home is the mighty sea ;  
 He has left his cottage to breast the wave,  
 For the good of you and me.  
 Nursed in the dangers of the deep,  
 Rock'd by the winds and waves to sleep,  
 Climbing the masts that are up in the sky,—  
 Will my boy be a sailor, by-and-by?"

## III.

"This is the shepherd, faithful and true,  
 Watching over his flock ;  
 You may hear his pipe the long day through,  
 Ringing from rock to rock.

He bears the small lambs home on his back,  
And leadeth those who have lost the track  
Safe to their fold, 'neath the starry sky.—  
Will my boy be a shepherd, by-and-by?"

## IV.

"Who is this, with the great white wings?"—  
"This is the Angel mild,  
Yet strong to fight, who brings holy things  
To the heart of my little child.  
He once was a Child himself, like you,  
Striving his Father's will to do.  
God gave him wings, and he soar'd on high. . . .  
Will my boy be an Angel, by-and-by?"

*June, 1877.*



## HOME ACROSS THE QUIET MEADOWS.

## I.

**H**OME across the quiet meadows,  
 Shines a light through evening shadows,  
 Bright as wand of fairy ;  
 Leads me to the home I long for,  
 Which my heart beats ever strong for ;  
 Leads me to the home I long for,  
 Home again to Mary.  
 Hark ! the tinkling flocks before me !  
 And the shepherd's pipe comes o'er me,  
 Ringing through the wild-wood.  
 On the sky's brow, smoothed from wrinkles  
 Furrowed by Day's cares, Night sprinkles  
 Here and there, a star that twinkles,  
 Like the eyes of Childhood.  
 Home across the quiet meadows,  
 Shines a light through evening shadows,  
 Bright as wand of fairy ;  
 Leads me to the home I long for,  
 Which my heart beats ever strong for ;  
 Leads me to the home I long for,  
 Home again to Mary !



## ALONE ON THE SHORE.

## I.

I STOOD on the cold grey rock that looks out on  
 the hungry sea,  
 And the waves that were boiling below my feet bore  
 my true love away from me.  
 Oh, how often since then, have waves and waters  
 striven,  
 And unto the sea, at sunset time, the peace of God  
 been given !  
 But thou, O thou, my Love ! no more—no more  
 return'st to me,  
 And I sit alone on the desolate shore, and list to the  
 surging sea.

## II.

An image of mortal life are the waves around me  
 vext ;  
 Ebbing one hour with strife, flowing with joy the  
 next.  
 Some crafts they wreck for ever, cast some upon the  
 beach,  
 Where happy sunsets bring them peace the world  
 can never reach.  
 But thou, O thou, my Love ! no more—no more  
 return'st to me,  
 And I sit alone on the desolate shore, and list to the  
 surging sea.

## REMEMBER OR FORGET.

## I.

I SAT beside the streamlet,  
 I watch'd the water flow,  
 As we together watch'd it  
 One little year ago ;  
 The soft rain pattered on the leaves,  
 The April grass was wet.  
 Ah ! folly to remember ;—  
 'Tis wiser to forget.

## II.

The nightingales made vocal  
 June's palace paved with gold ;  
 I watched the rose you gave me  
 Its warm red heart unfold ;  
 But breath of rose and bird's song  
 Were fraught with wild regret.  
 'Tis madness to remember ;  
 'Twere wisdom to forget.

## III.

I stood among the gold corn,  
 Alas ! no more, I knew,  
 To gather gleaner's measure  
 Of the love that fell from you.  
 For me, no gracious harvest—  
 Would God we ne'er had met !  
 Tis hard, Love, to remember, but  
 'Tis harder to forget.

## IV.

The streamlet now is frozen,  
The nightingales are fled,  
The cornfields are deserted,  
And every rose is dead.  
I sit beside my lonely fire,  
And pray for wisdom yet—  
For calmness to remember,  
Or courage to forget.



## THE MAID I LOVE.

## I.

I LOVE a maid whose eyes are blue,  
 Who never walks but runs,  
 Whose voice is shrilly-clear and who  
 Is very fond of buns.  
 You'll not be shocked if you behold  
 Her seated on my knee,—  
 The maid I love is six years old,  
 And I am thirty-three !

## II.

She thinks I'm very old, I know,  
 She treats me like her slave,  
 She laughs in mockery when I show  
 Her how she should behave.  
 She pulls my whiskers when I scold,  
 And dances round in glee—  
 But then—she's only six years old,  
 And I am thirty-three !

## III.

I fear she's rather fickle, too,  
 She has a score of "flames,"—  
 She makes them tell her tales untrue,  
 And play at noisy games.

In search of crumbs, like robin bold,  
She hops from knee to knee—  
But then, she's only six years old,  
And I am thirty-three !

## IV.

And when my back is bent with years,  
And I no longer sing,  
And she hath known the cares and tears  
That life must surely bring,  
I know her loving heart will hold  
A tender thought of me,  
In days when she was six years old,  
And I was thirty-three !



## JENNY IN THE ORCHARD.

'T WAS in an orchard that I met my Jenny long ago;  
 The apples were not half so red as were her  
 cheeks, I trow,

The sunlight through the boughs made sport upon her  
 golden hair,

For hide and seek it found no place within a mile as  
 fair.

She smiled on me : I whispered low, "My Jenny, I  
 perceive

That Eden was an orchard, and you resemble Eve !"

She plucked an apple from the bough, and laughing  
 gave it me.

"Take it, for apples are not here forbidden fruit, you  
 see."

As she reached up, I stole my arm around her waist  
 and sighed—

"The fruit I crave is Jenny's love, and that's to me  
 denied !"

She blushed. "Ah ! serpent-like your arm winds  
 round my waist, 'tis true

The Tempter in the orchard was not so bold as you !"

I wooed her all the winter long, I won her in the May ;  
 The apple-blossoms strewed Love's path upon our  
 wedding day ;

And now, though many a one is dead, my Jenny,  
    silver-hair'd,  
Still sits beneath the apple-tree that fifty springs have  
    spared.  
With children's hands to guide our steps, we totter  
    down the steep,  
Till both, within that orchard, at last shall fall asleep.



## THE MAID OF THE MILL.

## I.

GOLDEN years ago, in a mill beside the sea,  
 There dwelt a little maiden, who plighted her  
     faith to me ;  
 The mill-wheel now is silent, the maid's eyes closèd be ;  
 And all that now remains of her, are the words she  
     sang to me.

“ Do not forget me ! Do not forget me !  
     Think sometimes of me still,  
 When the morn breaks, and the throstle awakes,  
     Remember the maid of the mill ! ”

## II.

Leaden years have passed, grey-haired I look around ;  
 The earth has no such maidens now, such mill-wheels  
     turn not round.

But whenever I think of Heaven, and of what the  
     angels be,  
 I see again that little maid, and hear her words to me.

“ Do not forget me ! Do not forget me !  
     Think sometimes of me still,  
 When the morn breaks, and the throstle awakes,  
     Remember the maid of the mill ! ”



## LOVE'S STAR.

## I.

I N the stream, one star above  
Lies reflected brightly here.  
In my darkened life one love  
Shines through all the distance clear.  
Half the night long, by the stream, Love,  
I am watching that pale star,  
Till I fall asleep to dream, Love,  
And behold thy face, afar.

## II.

Through the darkness round me spread  
Heaven's pure star of Love prevails,  
In the thicket over head.  
Murmur low the nightingales.  
Half the night long, by the stream, Love,  
I am watching that pure star,  
Till I fall asleep to dream, Love,  
And behold thy face afar.



## THE DANUBE RIVER.

**D**O you recall that night in June,  
 Upon the Danube river?  
 We listened to a Ländler tune,  
 We watched the moonbeams quiver.  
 I oft since then have watched the moon,  
 But never, Love, oh! never,  
 Can I forget that night in June,  
 Adown the Danube river!

## II.

Our boat kept measure with its oar,  
 The music rose in snatches,  
 From peasants dancing on the shore  
 With boist'rous songs and catches.  
 I know not why that Ländler rang  
 Through all my soul—but never  
 Can I forget the songs they sang  
 Adown the Danube river.



## WHEN WE ARE PARTED.

## I.

WHEN we are parted let me lie  
 In some far corner of thy heart,  
 Silent, and from the world apart,  
 Like a forgotten melody.  
 Forgotten of the world beside,  
 Cherisht by one, and one alone,  
 For some loved memory of its own ;  
 So let me in thy heart abide  
 When we are parted !

## II.

When we are parted, keep for me  
 The sacred stillness of the night ;  
 That hour, sweet Love, is mine by right ;  
 Let others claim the day of thee !  
 The cold world sleeping at our feet,  
 My spirit shall discourse with thine ;—  
 When stars upon thy pillow shine,  
 At thy heart's door I stand and beat,  
 Though we are parted.



“OVER THE MOUNTAIN AND DOWN TO THE SEA.”

I.

UP in the morning, ere daylight is breaking,  
Over the mountain and down to the sea,  
All nature round me, from slumber awaking,  
Calls me to thee, Love, calls me to thee.

II.

Then in the heat of the noon's burning hour,  
Over the mountain, and down to the sea,  
Bees humming round from the heart of each flower,  
Call me to thee, Love, call me to thee.

III.

Last, when the moon in her glory rejoices,  
Over the mountain and down to the sea,  
Nightingales round me with messenger voices  
Call me to thee, Love, call me to thee.



---

BIRD, on the eaves of my belovèd's dwelling,  
Sing out what I would breathe into her ear;  
May the full love within my bosom swelling,  
Through thee find utterance, musical and clear.

Swifter than thine, my spirit's wing will take me,  
And where thou can'st not go, through crystal pane;  
But love's interpreter to her I make thee,  
On window-sill, outpouring thy rich strain.

Tell her my heart beats with tumultuous passion,  
For the soft haven of its long unrest:  
In spring, from our dead past, new hopes we fashion,  
As thou tak'st mosses from thy last year's nest.

And though through wintry seasons we are parted,  
Still in her faith, as in a mantle, furl'd,  
Bid her be stedfast and courageous-hearted,  
Nor bow before the keen breath of the world.

Sing thy bold music, ever shriller, crisper,  
Through every room thy passionate love-songs sing;  
But when thou fliest hence, in autumn, whisper,  
"Love, once enthroned here, never can take wing."



“MY LOVE’S WORTH ALL THE WORLD.”

MY love’s worth all the world to me :  
 Her walk, to others’ dance, is light.  
 When she comes by, the sun rides high,  
 And when she’s past, ’tis night !

Her gentle voice, that bids “good-day,”  
 Is music that my soul loves best ;  
 Her deep-set eyes, her low replies,  
 The dreams that haunt my rest.

Her presence, like fresh morning showers,  
 Gives to all things refreshing grace ;  
 If she but stoop, sweet buds that droop,  
 Gaze up into her face.

That May-day face—where nothing lives  
 That is not bright, for long together ;  
 Thoughts come and go, like winds that blow  
 The clouds in golden weather.

Life’s passing shades have scarcely chill’d  
 The gladness of her spirit’s light—  
 O when she’s by, the sun seems high,  
 And when she’s past, ’tis night !



## TOO LATE.

I WOULD have made a song in spring,  
 But dissonance my young heart haunted,  
 A chord untrue I would not sing,  
 I could not find the words I wanted.  
 The autumn brought the notes, the words—  
 The music that should rule my fate,  
 The true solution of the chords—  
 I found it all—too late !

I would have drawn in summer days  
 The portrait that my fancy painted !  
 The eyes—the forehead, crown'd with bays,  
 The smile by no deception tainted—  
 I found that noble type at last :  
 The snow was falling round my gate ;  
 A knight, in armour clad, rode past—  
 Rode past ! . . . It was too late !

*October, 1880.*



## IN THE EVENING.

## I.

**M**Y love, when life was young, I knew  
 But little what you were to be,  
 A light more bounteous to me,  
 While lengthening shadows grew.  
 Have I been silent, Love? or cold?  
 It may be you have little guess'd  
 All the strong love, half-unexpress'd,—  
 Stronger, as I grew old.

## II.

But, Darling, when the day is done,  
 And we together walk at peace,  
 In that bright world, where sorrows cease,  
 Beyond the set of sun :  
 What best of me you brought to light  
 On this dark earth shall there expand,  
 And each shall wholly understand  
 What now is hid from sight.

*April, 1880.*



## CHANGE.

## I.

MY Love is gone to live in London town,  
 Has left the hills and cottage of her youth,  
 For silk has changed her simple russet-gown,  
 Barter'd for gold her constancy and truth.  
 Ah ! is she happy ? If I thought she were,  
 Would there be comfort for me in despair ?

## II.

My Love is gone to grace the crowded ways,  
 The hawthorn lanes are empty of delight,  
 The woods no longer echo with her praise,  
 And on each budding rose hath fall'n a blight.  
 Ah ! is she happy ? If I thought she were,  
 Would there be comfort for me in despair ?

1881.



## THE KING.

## I.

SHE has not found her King as yet  
 The golden days go by,  
 They bring no sorrows to forget,  
 Nor any cause to sigh.  
 No heart for her devotion made,  
 The passionate summers bring,  
 Unharm'd she walks, and unaffray'd ;—  
 She has not found her King.

## II.

Men bring their titles and their gold ;  
 She smiles, and turns away ;  
 The man must be of other mould,  
 The man whom she'll obey.  
 Though poor in honours and in land,  
 Rich in a rarer thing,  
 Titled by God alone he'll stand  
 Whom she will own her King.

## III.

But when he comes, as come he will,  
 A sceptre in his hand,

With supplication that shall fill  
Her soul like a command.  
Straightway will she obey, and take  
Whate'er this world may bring ;  
Proud and contented for his sake,  
Whom she hath made her King.

*Aug. 1878.*



## THE WILD WIND.

THE wild wind blows from far away,—  
What message to the sons of men?  
Refresh and purify, and play  
Among our fever'd haunts, and then  
Die gently with the death of day!

O, would, my far-off Love, that I  
For one short hour at morn could flee  
Like that wild wind, across the sky,  
And having kiss'd thy lips—for me,  
It were enough—and I would die!

*Aug. 19th, 1878.*



## THE FORSAKEN.

## I.

SHE sat beside the mountain springs,  
 Her feet were on the water's brink,  
 And oft she wept when she beheld  
     The birds that lighted there to drink ;  
 She wept : but as they spread their wings,  
     Her sweet voice followed them on high—  
 “ He will return—I know him well ;  
     He would not leave me here to die.”

## II.

And there she sat, as months rolled on,  
     Unmindful of the changing year ;  
 She heeded not the sun, or snow,  
     All seasons were alike to her.  
 She looked upon the frozen stream,  
     She listened to the night bird's cry ;  
 “ He will return—I know him well ;  
     He would not leave me here to die.”

## III.

And still she sits beside the springs,  
     And combs the gold drips of her hair ;

Red berries for a bridal crown  
At early morn she places there.  
At every shadow on the grass  
She starts, and murmurs with a sigh,  
“He will return—I know him well;  
He would not leave me here to die.”



### THE BIRD'S WARNING.

A BIRD is calling from bower to brake,  
 Awake! Awake!  
 The Ladye treads lightly the turret stair,  
 Her true Knight waits in the thicket there.  
 Awake! Awake!

A bird is singing from topmost bough,  
 They are happy now !  
 Shaking out songs of wild delight  
 From his covert of leaves, o'er the Ladye and Knight.  
 They are happy now !

A bird is wheeling in midmost air,  
Beware ! Beware !  
But the lovers are deaf to his call, Alas !  
A shadow comes stealing across the grass . . .  
Beware ! Beware !

A bird is moaning up in the tree,—  
Ah ! woe is me !  
Wedded at last by a rapier-thrust,  
They lie locked together in death-cold dust.  
Ah ! woe is me !



## COME A HUNDRED YEARS.

**H**OUND in leash and hawk in hand,  
 I sought my lady fair and fine ;  
 "I thee endow with half my land,  
 An thou consentest to be mine."  
 "All these will pass away," she said,  
 "Naught will remain to me when dead,  
 Come a hundred years!"

"Fame," I cried, "when life grows cold,  
 Lives in men from mouth to mouth,  
 Thee I'll crown with a crown of gold,  
 And sing thy praise through all the South."  
 "Alas!" she sighed, "or praise or blame,  
 To me it will be all the same,  
 Come a hundred years!"

"I'll sing thee, Dear, with such true love,  
 As shall proclaim thy rarest worth,  
 In vain for me, where'er I rove,  
 Shall shine the brightest eyes of earth."  
 She smiled, "Beyond the moth and rust,  
 This only will not turn to dust,  
 Come a hundred years!"



"GREEN GROWS THE WILLOW."

BALLAD.

O! I LOVE my love the best,  
*Green grows the willow,*  
 With the gold cross on her breast,  
 Lying down to take her rest  
*On her green turf pillow.*

Calm she looks, nor shy, nor bold,  
*Green grows the willow,*
When mine eyes pierce the fresh mould,  
Where she lies, in white robes stoled,  
*On her green turf pillow.*

Calm she looks, and very fair,  
                *Green grows the willow,*  
With the grass-roots in her hair—  
O ! my love is constant *there*,  
                *On her green turf pillow.*

False was she that now is kind,  
                    *Green grows the willow,*  
Blow it East or Western wind,  
Nothing now can change her mind,  
                    *On her green turf pillow.*

Living, we were sundered wide,

*Green grows the willow,*

Dead, shall nothing us divide,

When we two sleep side by side

*On our green turf pillow.*



## THE KNIGHT'S HORN.

**A** KNIGHT rode forth in golden mail,  
 Along the river strand,  
 A Ladye o'er the castle-wall  
 Leant forth, and waved her hand.  
 "Thine, thine till death!" the Ladye sighed;  
 The Knight's Horn echoed far and wide,  
 "When next I blow that call," he cried,  
 "Reply, Love, then as now!"  
 The Horn along the morning air  
 Leapt clear, as down a silver stair,  
 Tra, la, la, Tra, la, la,  
 As the Knight did blow.

Years after, late one summer eve,  
 There rode along that strand  
 An aged Knight; his silver horn  
 He grasped with trembling hand.  
 He blew; and yet the blast he blew  
 No answer from the Castle drew.  
 "Ah! is she dead or false?" (none knew!)  
 The old Knight dwelt alone:  
 But often, as he paced the wall,  
 The peasants heard that bugle-call,  
 Tra, la, la, &c.,  
 On the silence blown.

And still the boatmen, as they ply  
    Their ferry o'er the tide,  
And children, at their evening play  
    Along the river side,  
Hear the faint Horn that echoes blow,  
Among the mountains, crowned with snow,  
And whisper to each other, "Lo !  
    The Knight his Ladye calls !"  
And as the echo dies away,  
"Alas ! she answers not," they say—  
    Tra, la, la, &c.,  
    Listen how he calls !



## MORNING CHORALE.

THE Golden East is breaking clear,  
 And one by one now disappear  
     The trembling stars :  
 Grey shadows into purple melt,  
 And wider grows the horizon's belt ;  
     The opening bars  
 Of Day's great symphony are felt,  
                     Awake ! Awake !

From wind-stirred bough the whispering leaves  
 Begin to sing : from cottage eaves  
     The wakening bird :  
 The flowers arise, refreshed and strong,  
 And, through the world, great Nature's song  
     Once more is heard.  
 Hark ! through the hills it rings along,  
                     Awake ! Awake !



---

A SONG to lay at the feet of my Love—  
Something that when the singing is done,  
And the singer himself hath past away,  
May recall the voice of that absent one,  
And the whispered love of a vanished day—  
This would I lay at the feet of my Love.

A rose to lay at the feet of my Love—  
To live in her hair for just as long  
As my singing may linger about her heart,  
But whose petals shall keep, as shall the song,  
Their sweetness, when colour and voice depart—  
This will I lay at the feet of my Love.

A heart to lay at the feet of my Love !  
To leave it there in its simple truth,  
Not for a day—not for a day—  
Strong to endure, when the heat of youth,  
And cold mid-age shall have past away—  
Such heart I lay at the feet of my Love !



## THE DAY OF LIFE.

DAY of Life ! thine hours are fast advancing,  
 Faster, one by one !  
 Brilliant hopes, like diamonds adorning  
 Dewy meadows, disappear with morning,  
       'Neath the noon-day sun.

Now the mid-day heat and passion burneth,  
       May my arm be strong  
 To plough in Life's broad field beside my neighbour,  
 Singing with cheerful heart that lightens labour,  
       The old untiring song !

Cast me gently on the shore at evening,  
       With the one I love !  
 May a sunset golden-calm surround us,  
 Sliding into darkness, where it found us,  
       Till the Dawn above !



## HYMN TO NIGHT.

O HOLY Night !  
Send down thine angel, Sleep,  
On weary hearts,  
And watching eyes that weep.  
As on a mother's breast,  
In all our daily grief,  
We fly to thee for rest  
And find relief !  
Soother of human sighs,  
Father of lullabies,  
King of a world that lies  
Far out of sight ;  
O ! Holy Night !  
In all our daily grief  
We fly to thee for rest,  
And find relief !



## THE FISHER.

“FISHER, if beside this stream  
 Thou hast stood since break of day,  
 Hast thou seen a ladye fair,  
 Wandering up or down this way?”  
 “I have stood beside the stream  
 All day long,” the Fisher said,  
 “I have seen no ladye fair  
 Save the ladye who is dead,  
 Floating down the stream.”

“This can ne’er my true love be ;  
 She was full of life and light ;  
 E’en the lilies on her breast  
 Cannot yet be faded quite.  
 She hath eyes wide open, clear,  
 Lips and cheeks of healthy red.”—  
 —“I have seen no ladye here  
 Save the ladye who is dead,  
 Floating down the stream.”

“And the red was on her lip,  
 And the light was in her eye,  
 And the lilies on her breast  
 Had not yet had time to die !”—

*Then I flung me on the ground,  
O ! the passionate tears I shed !  
Would that I were there, at peace,  
With the ladye who is dead  
Floating down the stream.*



## THE SKIPPER AND HIS BOY.

HIGH ran the sea, and the wind was wild,  
 When the skipper called to his only child,  
 "My boy, if fears assail thee now,  
 Go pray in silence down below."  
 "Fear !" cried the boy, "I know not fear,  
 Father, when thy right arm is near . . .  
 But merry it is, when the waves run high,  
 To ride together, my father and I !

"Mother will watch from the door, and pray  
 For us both, dear father, till break of day ;  
 And she'll be the first, when her prayer is done,  
 To catch sight of our sails 'neath the morning sun."  
 "Yes, yes," quoth the skipper, brief and stern,  
 "To-morrow shall see our bark return  
 O'er the green waves, 'neath the morning sky,  
 We'll ride together, my boy and I !"

The mother is watching—but never more  
 Will that gallant skipper return to shore !  
 The boy's black handkerchief lies on the sand,—  
 It was tied round his neck by her parting hand.  
 And all that doth of the skipper remain,  
 Is the compass he never shall use again.  
 But she knows that now, on the Jasper Sea,  
 They ride together, his boy and he !

## EFFIE.

I STOOD in the silent playground,  
Where I had been wont to hear  
The voice of my little Effie  
Ringing out sweet and clear.  
But the words of the child who was left me  
Rebuked my grief that day,—  
“Sister cannot come to us, Father,  
She is now with the Angels at play.”

The song that she left half finished,  
Was Heaven’s pure song of love;  
Her life was a short burst of music,—  
She has gone now to end it above.  
There is one beam the more in Heaven  
Since God beckoned Effie away,  
And her sister has taught me to know it ;—  
She is now with the Angels at play !



## TWILIGHT-SONG.

CLOSE thine eyes, the day is done ;  
Lay thee down to sleep,  
Fold thy pinions broad and strong,  
That have borne thy soul along,  
O'er the troubled deep.

Life, my child, is like the day—  
May its morn be blest !  
Take thou manfully thy share  
Of allotted toil and care,  
Then lie down and rest.

Only once, the morning breaks ;  
Noon will bring its tears ;  
Through the shadow and the sun,  
Soon our little race is run,  
And the night appears.



## THE MUSIC OF THE SEA.

I HAVE not seen the glorious sea  
 Since I was a little child,  
 Ocean-bred in a fisher's hut,  
 Washed by the waters wild.  
 And now the shells upon my shelf  
 Are dearer than aught to me !  
 My soul still longs and listens for  
 The music of the sea.

I learnt to walk to the sound of waves,  
 The shingly beach along ;  
 The salt-spray dashed against the pane,  
 That was my cradle-song.  
 The sea-mews' cry was far before  
 The thrushes' song to me,  
 O ! my heart still longs and listens for  
 The music of the sea.

To drag nets filled with gleaming fish  
 Under the silver moon ;  
 To watch ships on the far blue line  
 Grow nearer in the noon ;  
 To make friends with the whistling wind  
 O'er the waves is the life for me ;—  
 My heart longs wearily to hear  
 The music of the sea !

And when my sails are furled at last,  
Life's troublous voyage o'er,  
I fain would fall asleep to that  
Sweet sound upon the shore.  
In the grey sand, could I but choose,  
My narrow bed should be ;  
And I should sleep more soundly for  
The music of the sea !



## THE GIRL TO HER BIRD.

SING, little Birdie, sing to me ;  
 Beat not thy wings against the wire,  
 Nor waste thy heart in vain desire  
 To be free !

“Open the door,” I hear thee say,  
 “And let me fly away, away,  
 To haunts I know so green and cool,  
 Where branches over-arch the pool.  
 My cage is gilded—but the sky  
 Is pleasanter. Oh ! let me fly !”  
 Shall ? or shall I not ? Ah me !  
 That truant Love were caged like thee,  
 And never, never could get free !  
 Love, little Birdie, Love, I know  
 Would here contentedly remain,  
 Nor beat against the wires in vain,  
 Nor pine to go !

“But Love enjoys,” I hear thee cry,  
 “All Nature ’neath a sunlit sky ;  
 He drinketh ever at the springs  
 Of fresh delight, with folded wings :  
 Freedom were death to *him*—to *me*  
 Freedom is life ! Oh ! set me free !”

Poor Bird ! unlike to thee, I pray  
 That Love may here be caged some day—  
 The door is open—fly away !

## BARCAROLE.

COME where the waves are rocking  
 My bark upon their breast,  
 As a mother lulls her little one  
 To and fro to rest.  
 Come, and beneath the quiet stars  
 We'll sing, love, sweet and low,  
 While the water laps around our oars,  
 And the long waves come and go.  
 Those waves run up and fill  
 The star-lit sandy coves.  
 Delay not thou until  
 It be too late, my love !

Come, for the night is waning,  
 The crescent moon is gone,  
 The winds are whispering of the morn  
 That shall appear anon.  
 Come, while the world is hushed in sleep,  
 And the stars alone can know  
 The burthen of the songs we sing,  
 As the long waves come and go—  
 Those waves run up and fill  
 The star-lit sandy coves,  
 Delay not thou until  
 It be too late, my love !

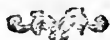
“I NEVER BREATHE HER NAME.”

THERE is a lady I do know,  
 And I love her still the same,  
 Through the world where'er I go,  
 Though I never breathe her name.

In the pilgrimage I make,  
 Never shall my lips proclaim  
 All I suffer for her sake,  
 —And I never breathe her name.

Who is he that would not shield  
 Her he loves from breath of blame?  
 None this poisonous arm can wield;  
 For I never breathe her name.

Thus until the close of day,  
 Still, unseen, that constant flame  
 Burns my secret life away,  
 And I never breathe her name!



## “ IN MY LADY’S GARDEN.”

I N my lady’s garden, fair and tall,  
The stately lily grows,  
And its scent comes o’er the garden wall,  
When the West Wind blows.  
O wild West Wind ! O rare West Wind !  
Bid the East not so unkind to be,  
But in travelling hitherward to waft  
O’er that garden-wall a thought of me !

Underneath my Lady’s garden-wall,  
I sat at evening-time !  
In the stream I watched the blossom fall  
Of the flowering lime.  
O wild West Wind ! O rare West Wind !  
Waft down the blossoms of her love to me,  
And they will sweeten all my heart, O stream,  
As those fair blossoms, falling, sweeten thee !



## THE MORNING AND EVENING STAR.

MORNING star that shin'st above her,  
 Guard my love from sorrow's frown,  
 Bid the happy hills to love her,  
 On her lattice looking down.  
 In between the roses peeping,  
 Smile upon her, Morning Star,  
 For I give her to thy keeping,  
 While I watch thee, from afar.

Evening star, my lady sleepeth !  
 Watch her with thy jealous ray,  
 Tell her so my fond heart keepeth  
 Watch, a thousand miles away.  
 And when sweet winds come a-gleaning  
 Songs of love across the sea . . .  
 May she at her casement leaning  
 Hear the words I breathe to thee.



“LOVE, WITHOUT THEE.”

AH, for this weary life !  
 Were there not peace with thee—  
 Could I endure its strife,  
 Did it not cease with thee ?  
 Star of my dwelling-place,  
 Where'er it be,  
 Earth would have lost its grace,  
 Love, without thee !

Time robbeth, day by day,  
 Bright hours of youth from us,  
 Yet steals he not away  
 Constancy's truth from us.  
 Star ! that with Morning's light,  
 Shone over me,  
 How could I meet the Night  
 Love, without thee ?

Time, with unerring spade,  
 Digs a grave low for us ;  
 Yet shall not love be laid  
 There, when tears flow for us.  
 Star, that with purer beam  
 Shines o'er Death's sea,  
 Joyless would Heaven seem,  
 Love, without thee !

## AT MY FEET.

**A**T my feet she was playing there—  
 In the old, old nursery days,—  
 A baby with lengths of golden hair,  
 And garrulous infant ways.  
 The spot where she stood seemed ever  
 Flooded with sunshine gay ;  
 And she grew like the rolling river,  
 Rapidly day by day.

At my feet she was kneeling there—  
 A woman heart-broken and lorn,  
 Alone with God in her great despair,  
 When I found her again that morn !  
 Years of storm and rain  
 Had clouded that radiant face,  
 As thus I beheld her once again,  
 Praying for Christ's dear grace.

At my feet she is lying there !  
 Safe at last from the tempest wild ;  
 And knowing more of the Shepherd's care  
 Than she did as a little child.  
 After long years of pain,  
 She sleeps 'neath the quiet sod,  
 And the spirit, free from its mortal chain,  
 Is at rest again with God.

LOVE, THE PILGRIM.<sup>1</sup>

**E**VERY day a Pilgrim, blindfold,  
 When the night and morning meet,  
 Entereth the slumbering city,  
     Stealeth down the silent street ;  
 Lingereth round some battered doorway,  
     Leaves unblest some portal grand,  
 And the walls, where sleep the children,  
     Toucheth, with his warm young hand.  
         Love is passing ! Love is passing !—  
         Passing while ye lie asleep :  
         In your blessed dreams, O children,  
         Give him all your hearts to keep !


Blindfold is this Pilgrim, Maiden.  
     Though to-day he touched thy door,  
 He may pass it by to-morrow—  
     —Pass it—to return no more.  
 Let us then with prayers entreat him,—  
     Youth ! her heart, whose coldness grieves,  
 May one morn by Love be softened ;  
     Prize the treasure that he leaves.  
         Love is passing ! Love is passing !  
         All, with hearts to hope and pray,  
         Bid this pilgrim touch the lintels  
         Of your doorways every day.

<sup>1</sup> Suggested by a sketch by E. Burne Jones.

## YEAR AFTER YEAR.

**I**N at the open window  
 The birds fly over her head,  
 Laid on its snowy pillow,  
 The gold hair round it spread.  
 Meekly her palms are folded,  
 Without a trouble or fear ;  
 She lies there taking her rest—  
     Year after year.

The birds fly round and round her !  
 She neither moves nor speaks ;  
 The fringed eyelids softly  
 Rest on the marble cheeks.  
 Those eyelids now are never  
 Dimm'd by a falling tear ;  
 She lies there taking her rest—  
     Year after year.

It was thus she lay at morning,   
 They painted her there that day ;  
 And when the birds flew in next dawn,  
 They had carried the dead away.  
 But still by the open window,  
 On that wall doth the maid appear ;  
 And she lies there taking her rest—  
     Year after year.

## THE LOVER TO HIS MISTRESS.

**N**OT for the splendour of the brow that shines  
 Upon me at this minute, Love,  
 Not for the cunning ringlet that entwines,  
 Snake-like, the finger in it, Love,—  
 Not for thy wit, nor all thy radiant smiles,  
 Nor that sweet voice that my dark hour beguiles,  
 Do I adore thee ! But because I see  
 Something none other has, Sweet-heart, in thee !

There is a beauty that a man desires,  
 And wearies with possessing, Love—  
 What is the secret charm that never tires ?  
 A secret worth the guessing, Love !  
 And thou hast guessed it—of the stars and moon,  
 And glad-returning morn ; for I as soon  
 Of Nature's fairest sights and sounds could tire,  
 As, kneeling here, could other shrine desire !



“AFTERWARDS.”

I.

WE can never meet again,  
     For our lot is now decided ;  
     Our two paths are now divided.  
 Is it more of loss, or gain,  
     To have loved thee once, as I did ?

II.

Nothing ever can efface  
     The deep stain of my transgression ;—  
     All the memories of possession,  
 All a bleeding heart's disgrace,  
     All a cruel world's oppression.

III.

Who has suffered, understands  
     How, when Hope no longer borrows  
     From the past, to gild our morrows,  
 We can sit with folded hands,  
     At the quiet end of sorrows.

IV.

“Was it better to have met”—  
     So you sigh, in Love's December,  
     Watching cold grey ash and ember—  
 “Than have nothing to regret,  
     And have nothing to remember ? ”

*Aug.*, 1881.

## THE SONG'S MESSAGE.

## I.

FLY to her heart, my little Song,  
 And say that unto her belong  
     Thy trills and graces ;  
 That, as I sing, before my eyes  
 I see the dearest face arise  
     Of all dear faces !

## II.

Say that by night thou camest to me,  
 Like some poor bird, from o'er the sea  
     That feebly flutters ;  
 Till, soaring with morn's strength to sing,  
 The tender hopes of budding Spring  
     Once more it utters.

## III.

O Song, like streamlet on its way,  
 That hath no respite, night or day,  
     Do not fatigue her !  
 But may thy melody at times  
 Floating, with its persistent rhymes,  
     Her heart beleaguer !

IV.

So, little Song, without applause,  
In secret plead with her my cause,  
Till her heart, ringing  
With thy low music, hath confessed  
That, of all songs, she loves the best  
That of Love's singing!

*April, 1881.*



## FROM A BATTLEMENT.

## I.

O SWALLOW, hast thou found my knight?  
 Last autumn, dost thou mind  
 When thou wast wheeling round for flight,  
 I charged thee, Bird, to find  
 My Love, in lands beyond the sea,  
 And give him heart's desire from me.

## II.

Didst tell him that the child is grown?  
 Didst tell him I wax thin?  
 That his goss-hawk without is flown?  
 His hound is dead within?  
 Didst tell him that all night I pine  
 To know his heart's desire is mine?

## III.

Was he encamped on burning plain?  
 Was he of goodly cheer?  
 Alas! we may not meet again  
 For many a weary year.  
 Only I know my knight is true,  
 And sent his heart's desire by you.

*Sept., 1881.*

## SWEETHEART.

## I.

SWEETHEART, I have no hero's face  
 To plead my passion's cause,  
 No knightly, no persuasive grace,  
 To win a world's applause.  
 What should I do—what can I be,  
 Sweetheart, to be beloved of thee?

## II.

The waters play not in my life,  
 Like fountains sparkling clear ;  
 They rush not with the torrent's strife ;  
 Mine is the deep, still mere,  
 Where one bright face, beloved by me,  
 Sweetheart, I still reflected see.

## III.

No buds of Spring, no tender shoots,  
 No Summer flowers that fade,  
 Only the Autumn's mellow fruits  
 Are mine. Art thou afraid,  
 Sweetheart, to trust thy life to me,  
 Who would lay down my life for thee?

*Oct., 1881.*



# RECITATIONS.



## LOST AND FOUND.

SOME miners were sinking a shaft in Wales—  
 (I know not where,—but the facts have filled  
 A chink in my brain, while other tales

Have been swept away ; as when pearls are spilled,  
 One pearl rolls into a chink in the floor :)  
 —Somewhere, then, where God's light is killed,

And men tear in the dark, at the earth's heart-core,  
 These men were at work, when their axes knocked  
 A hole in a passage closed years before.

A slip in the earth, I suppose, had blocked  
 This gallery suddenly up, with a heap  
 Of rubble, as safe as a chest is locked,

Till these men picked it ; and 'gan to creep  
 In, on all-fours. Then a loud shout ran  
 Round the black roof,—“ Here's a man asleep ! ”

They all pushed forward, and scarce a span  
 From the mouth of the passage, in sooth, the lamp  
 Fell on the upturned face of a man.

No taint of death, no decaying damp  
 Had touched that fair young brow, whereon  
 Courage had set its glorious stamp.

Calm as a monarch upon his throne,  
Lips hard clenched, no shadow of fear,  
He sat there taking his rest, alone.

He must have been there for many a year.  
The spirit had fled ; but there was its shrine,  
In clothes of a century old or near !

The dry and embalming air of the mine  
Had arrested the natural hand of decay,  
Nor faded the flesh, nor dimmed a line.

Who was he then ? No man could say  
When the passage had suddenly fallen in—  
Its memory, even, was past away !

Awestruck, they stood : then, touched the skin,  
And handled the cloth. The flame o' the soul  
Had been blown out, ere its lamp grew thin.

In their great rough arms, begrimed with coal,  
They took him up, as a tender lass  
Will carry a babe, from that darksome hole,

To the outer world of the short warm grass.  
Then up spoke one, " Let us send for Bess,  
She is seventy-nine, come Martinmass :

Older than anyone here, I guess !  
Belike, she may mind when the wall fell there,  
And remember the chap by his comeliness."

So they brought old Bess with her silver hair,  
To the side of the hill, where the dead man lay,  
Ere the flesh had crumbled in outer air.

And the crowd around him all gave way,  
As with tottering steps old Bess drew nigh,  
And bent o'er the face of the unchanged clay.

Then suddenly rang a sharp low cry ! . . .  
Bess sank on her knees, and wildly tossed  
Her withered arms in the summer sky. . . .

"O Willie ! Willie ! my lad ! my lost !  
The Lord be praised ! after sixty years,  
I see you again ! . . . The tears you cost

O Willie darlin', were bitter tears ! . . .  
They never looked for ye underground,  
They told me a tale to mock my fears !

They said ye were auver the sea,—ye'd found  
A lass ye loved better nor me, to explain  
How ye'd a-vanished fra' sight and sound !

O Darlin' ! a long, long life o' pain  
I ha' lived since then ! . . . And now I'm old,  
'Seems a-most as if youth were come back again,

Seeing ye there wi' yer locks o' gold,  
And limbs sa straight as ashen beams, . . .  
I a'most forget how the years ha' rolled

Between us ! . . . O Willie ! how strange it seems  
To see ye here, as I've seen ye oft, . . .  
Auver and auver again in dreams !"

In broken words like these, with soft  
Low wails she rocked herself. And none  
Of the rough men around her scoffed.

For surely a sight like this, the sun  
Had rarely looked upon. Face to face,  
The old dead love, and the living one !

The dead, with its undimmed fleshly grace,  
At the end of threescore years; the quick,  
Puckered, and withered, without a trace

Of its warm girl-beauty ! A wizard's trick  
Bringing the youth and the love that were,  
Back to the eyes of the old and sick !

Those bodies were just of one age : yet there  
Death, clad in youth, had been standing still,  
While Life had been fretting itself threadbare !

But the moment was come ;—(as a moment will,  
To all who have loved, and have parted here,  
And have toiled alone up the thorny hill ;

When, at the top, as their eyes see clear,  
Over the mists in this vale below,  
Mere specks their trials and toils appear,

Beside the eternal rest they know !)  
Death came to old Bess that night, and gave  
The welcome summons that she should go.

And now, though the rains and winds may rave,  
Nothing can part them. Deep and wide,  
The miners that evening dug one grave.

And there while the summers and winters glide,  
Old Bess and young Willie sleep side by side !



## THE STORY OF TWO LIVES.

*(As related in a morning visit.)*

- A.* WELL! well! How strangely things fall out!  
     So they are married? Do you know  
     That he is old, and rather stout,  
     And she is fifty-six or so?
- B.* Ah, that is vulgar reckoning,—  
     And Love is blind! To him she seems  
     Still young and fair—and he, the king  
     Remains, of all her early dreams . . .  
     Shall age two faithful souls divide?  
     Shall years prevent two hearts from loving?  
     What constancy was ever tried  
     More than this couple's? . . . Do you doubt it?
- A.* Humph! well, perhaps, for turtle-doving  
     They may be thought a trifle old—  
     But tell me all you know about it.
- B.* 'Tis an old tale, and often told;  
     Now more than forty years since they  
     Were parted: penniless was he,  
     An orphan youth, and sweet Anne Grey,  
     The beauty of the "North Countree."  
     It never could be heard of! *never!*—  
     There was a talk of broken hearts,—

- A. Ah, boys and girls in vain endeavour  
To break *those* toys ; at least the parts  
I think so soon unite again,  
(Except, perhaps, some tiny particles !)  
That even if the crack remain,  
They still are *serviceable articles* !
- B. Well then, as hearts in life are tougher  
Than novels make them, Annie Grey  
Lived on, when he was sent away ;  
Although the road of life was rougher,  
And storms and biting winds did blow  
Round the heart's door. She said her mind  
Would never change, and was resigned  
To see her girlhood's hero go.  
Could she not wait ? The pebble lies  
Contented on the silent beach,  
Until the waves triumphant reach,  
And in their arms sweep off, the prize.  
She said so : but her voice was sad—  
Her father swore the girl was mad !  
This father was a man of honour,  
(Men called him,) of a poor, proud race,  
Who every day impressed upon her  
That all her fortune was her face—  
The boy had only love and youth !  
(It must be owned a slender rental),  
Combined with that uncringing truth  
To fortunes often detrimental.  
And so his Uncle John decreed  
In conference with Mr. Grey,  
That it was well, with all good speed

To send the orphan lad away—  
That he should cross the seas, and fight  
Beneath the burning Indian sun,  
And win a fortune, if he might,  
As other friendless youths had done.  
And if he fell, why who was there  
A narrow piece of crape to wear,  
But Uncle John ?

The years rolled by ; they might not write,  
His letters were returned unread ;  
And yet his love swerved not—in spite  
Of all his Uncle John had said.  
He kept undimmed before his eyes  
The constant hope of that one prize.  
And then at last a false report

Reached him, that she was married : She  
Of whom each night and morn he thought,  
For whom he worthier strove to be !  
Ambition's fairest star was set :

Thenceforth, this soldier only fought  
For Duty's sake, not Love's—and yet  
When good results from evil rise,  
You stoics ask with some surprise,  
(The end being happy,) where the harm is ? . .

Certain it is the service gained  
A sterner man, more self-contained,  
A better general of armies !  
From heart of youth the violets died ;  
In heart of man the oak spread wide.  
And while the soldier's fame grew up,

And bays were twined to deck his brow,  
She, like an acorn in its cup  
Dwelt lonely on her parent bough.  
Her boisterous brothers drank and swore,  
And shot, or hunted all the day :  
And home their booted friends they bore,  
Who made fierce love to Annie Grey.  
But obdurate to all was she,  
While youth to middle age slid by :  
Her father died ; she lived to see  
One after one, her kindred die.  
Four brothers to the grave she carried :  
And still Anne Grey remained unmarried.

Her life was like the silent floor,  
Where pattered tiny feet of yore ;  
And like those solitary walls,  
That echoed once to children's calls ;  
The faded portraits of the past,  
In *pastille*—far too bright to last !  
The line of empty rooms, shut up ;  
The marble naiad's moss-grown cup :  
The old piano's rusted string,  
Where sweetest music used to ring,  
The one cracked jar, where erst a pair  
Held richest perfumes from the air—  
All, all around, with types were rife,  
Of that lone heart and joyless life !

Was she still waiting, then ? Ah, no !  
That was a dream of long ago,

That, like the sun, had glorified  
The morning of her summer's day.  
And, like that golden sun, had died  
Behind the purple hills away.  
She was not waiting. She was sure  
They never more on earth should meet,  
Yet still her Hero's name was sweet ;  
Her pride in all his fame was pure—  
She neither knew, nor asked *the rest*. . . .  
(For Uncle John long since was dead ;)  
The Hero's public deeds she read.  
The story of his heart she guessed !  
Some woman in those Indian years  
Had wound about his heart a snare,  
She *might* be good—she must be fair—  
Pray God she had not caused him tears !  
Thus to herself the spinster thought,  
As winter after winter brought  
The snow-flakes on her auburn bands,  
And loosed the rings upon her hands.  
And then she murmured, "'Tis our lot  
That what in all the heat and strife  
Of man's career is soon forgot,  
Should make a lonely woman's life."

And what of him the while? the man,  
Who bronzed and scarred on Indian plains,  
Now forty years were past, began  
To feel the penalties and pains  
Of that hard life of self-denial?  
One arm the less, and K.C.B. !——

With these rewards for years of trial,  
At length he sighed to cross the sea.  
The thought of home is doubly dear  
After unrest, and toil, and strife :  
But what had honours done to cheer  
The solitary end of life ?  
—A Club arm-chair from noon till night :  
His home a lodging in Pall-Mall !  
It was not thus Hope painted bright  
The Home that he should love so well !  
But that was long ago ; since then,  
How changed is all ! Old friends are dead ;  
Old school-boys now are battered men,  
Their grandsons are about to wed !  
He—only he hath let the tide  
Of life flow past him, standing still.  
Little to mark the years, until  
He stands that youthful race beside.  
A bachelor of fifty-nine  
May well, indeed, for home repine !

But Fate, so rarely kind to those  
Who bend not circumstance to will,  
Decreed that tow'rds their Autumn's close,  
Those lives should crown each other still.  
She rarely left the home-estate ;  
But now she must to town, to wait  
Upon a cousin who had written,  
To say that she was sorely smitten  
With divers ills ;—a flighty dame,  
Unlike Anne Grey, who, all the same

Loved her and, being here, consented  
To stay and see the Exhibition ;  
Though it was plain her friend's condition  
Of lung and limbs had been invented  
To lure that ever-welcome comer !

Thus it fell out. One day, last summer,  
The General had stood for more  
Than half an hour transfixed, before  
"The Reading Girl," that sculptured rhyme,  
Of youth's sweet passion-budding time.  
His thoughts perhaps had travelled back,  
Into the unforgotten track  
Of the far Past : and in the place  
Of marble, rose a fair young face  
He used to watch in by-gone days,  
When, under evening's slanting rays,  
A girl sat thus intent—and read  
The stories of the noble dead.  
And lo ! while fancied semblance, traced,  
Slowly with life the stone replaced,  
Sudden, 'twixt him and it, there cross'd  
A visage in the flesh, almost  
As white, as though from the same block  
Of marble hewn : but wasted, dim,  
As a dream-phantom ; while on him  
The eyes turned mournfully. A shock  
Ran through his heart—he scarcely heard  
A shrill voice near him, till the sound  
Of his own name his senses stirred,  
And then the old man started round.

“ Well ! really this is quite a treat,

To meet you, General, in this buzz  
And crowd—reposing on a seat !

We hav’n’t met for such an age !

But then you know one never *does*

In London,—in this *Hermitage*

I call it, where it’s such a labour

To find out who’s one’s next-door neighbour !

And one may live secluded, quite

As much as any anchorite,

And never see a friend unless

One lives among the parks and squares,—

*No friendship stands two-shilling fares ;*

And, as you know, a wilderness

Beyond Tyburnia is *my* home !

But, General, you’re a Hero ! Come,  
Be brave, to-morrow dine with me—

Though lest you should not find a Hansom,

On your return, ’twere well to be

Clad in strong armour *cap à pie*,

(Like the dark Knight in Millais’ ‘ Ransom ’),

You’ll come, now, won’t you ? need I send

A note ? . . . Remember that we dine

At seven. . . . Ah ! let me, by the way,

Present you, General, to my friend—

A country cousin—Miss Anne Grey.”

’Twas thus, with commonplaces round,

With “ quips, and cranks, and wreathèd smiles,”

That after life’s wide-sundered miles

They once again each other found.

For thus in life the Melodrame  
And Comedy so often meet—  
As through church doors the solemn Psalm  
Blends with the music of the street.  
You guess the rest ; how forty years  
In that one hour had melted quite,  
Like the dark vapours of the night,  
When the first streak of dawn appears.  
And how once more they seemed to stand,  
A shower of bright spring blossoms o'er them,  
A Youth and Maiden, hand in hand,  
With Love, and Hope and Life before them.  
Who now in Autumn's shortening days  
Were met at last—unchanged and true,  
In spite of all the world could do :  
They knew it as their steadfast gaze  
Crossed in that hour. For why, in sooth,  
Should not true hands and hearts, being met,  
Be clasped in age as in their youth ?  
And so in steadfast comfort set  
Their feet together on the last  
Remaining rounds of life's dark ladder ?  
Instead of brooding on their past,  
And growing gloomier and sadder,  
Careless of self, of all each day . . .  
Now, tell me, will not poor Anne Grey  
Be infinitely better married ?  
A. My dear, your eloquence has carried  
Me over to your side completely !  
I think your General acted sweetly ;  
I wish he wasn't quite so stout,

But seriously I'm half inclined  
(I'm only sixty) to look out  
And see if I perhaps can find  
Some bald old gentleman in stocks,  
Who loved me fifty years ago  
In little pinafores and frocks !  
I might get up a touching show  
Of constancy.

*B.* Ah ! well my friend,  
The hour is yours—but by and by  
Laugh those who win ! when you and I  
Approach in loneliness the end  
Of life, it may be we shall share  
One wish—to be as this old pair.



## THE LADY'S PUNISHMENT.

**I** MET a lady in the narrow path,  
 That leadeth up into the wood of pines,  
 Whose red and jagged stems are clothed aloft  
 With marble foliage. Her face was white,  
 And with one hand she held her kirtle up,  
 Brimmed o'er with early flowers; cyclamen,  
 Anemone, and starry buds, whose name  
 I knew not. With the other hand,  
 She touched me on the arm, and sighing, said,  
 "Follow and I will show what things, and how  
 We sow in maddest joy, and reap in tears."  
 She turned, she glided up the wood; and I  
 Followed, as one pursuing in a dream,  
 Resistless, step by step, my pale-faced guide,  
 To where a dusky thicket closed about  
 A little space of turf,—a mound—no more:  
 And here she stopped, and let her kirtle drop  
 Its rosy treasures on the green earth's lap;  
 Then turned on me the stone-blue eyes, from which  
 Passion long since had drunk the tears away,  
 And once again in measured accents spake.  
 "In life my sin and punishment were hid  
 And now long since my very name is wiped

Out of men's memories. But haply here,  
The story of my grief, my life-long grief,  
May reach in this new world hearts that are deaf  
Unto the Preacher's voice.

“ I was the child  
And heiress of a robber-lord, who once  
In yonder tower, where reigns the owl, held rule ;  
Clenching his mailed hand on the march around.  
No princess, in the days of old was kept  
Curtained more closely from the chance side-wind  
Of love, that heedeth not degrees, nor wealth,  
But where he listeth, blows. Therefore, for me,  
Those only might come near my feet, endowed  
With great inheritance, or whose right arms  
Had compassed sov'reign mastery in raid,  
And foray. But of all these wolfish lords  
Not one had grace to win a woman's heart,  
Or child's,—for I was scarcely more, and turned  
Laughing from each, to falcon and to hound,  
And better pleased to play at ball, or dance  
In rings with all my merry maids, than list  
To vows of love . . . at least, I thought so then ;  
Till that soft side-wind took me unawares  
And captured me one morn. Upon this wise,  
It fell about. My father was away  
And I, my falcon on my wrist, rode forth,  
A train about me, through the flowery mead,  
Where the stream, swelled by winter's snow and rain,  
O'erlips its banks in spring. There, clad in grey,  
We met a sad and solitary man,  
Who with a deer-hound paced the river's marge—

His eyes were bent upon a book : but O !  
Their strange and subtle beauty when he turned  
His face, mid-day, upon me, drave the blood  
Circling through all my veins. I galloped on,  
Slipping the jesses of my bird, who soared  
Above his quarry ; when my jennet, stung  
By the sharp hand wherewith I urged her on,  
Reared up on high, and falling backwards, plunged  
Herself and me together in the stream.  
Swift as the wind,—ere falconer and page  
Could check their steeds and turn to succour me,  
The man—the man in grey—had leapt the bank,  
And striking out with one strong arm, he flung  
The other round me, as I struggling sank. . . .  
Thus it began. O stranger ! thus, the life  
Won back, new light flowed through that open door.  
From child to woman suddenly I sprang ;  
Woman, with senses passionately stirred ;  
Woman, who, loving, sacrifices all,  
To the one God of her idolatry !  
We met each morn : while yet the castle slept  
I through the postern in my garden ran,  
Creeping 'mong crystal moss and dewy fern,  
'Neath daybreak's opal sky, to this black wood. . . .  
Sweet stolen moments in the mists of dawn !  
Love's precious childhood, who too soon grows old,  
And blind, and passionless, alas !

We met

Each morn by stealth,—not otherwise ; for he,  
Preserver, Lord, and Master of my life,  
Had but his sword wherewith to win me then.

His brother's was the Seigneury that marched  
With ours, dividing sway from hill to hill ;  
And he, the younger, dowered with strength alone,  
Soldier of fortune, who had fleshed his sword  
In the late wars,—my father would have spurned  
His suit for me, whom riches, rank, and land  
Alone might win. But hearts were never yet  
Thus bartered : nor can such cold law infuse  
Strength to repel One mightier than it,  
When woman's veins have passionately drunk  
His subtle poison. Speak thou to the soul  
In such an evil—else unto the winds !  
Plead with it—strive with it—hold fast the hem  
Of its pure raiment : use such argument  
As only reacheth that immortal part  
Of man, or else be mute ! For, look you, what  
Doth touch no more than this vile dust of ours,  
How shall it shield us in our peril ? I  
Knew but the honour of my house—no more—  
No other guide—no other staff. . . . I fell. . .  
I fell ! and all grew dark about my eyes. . . .  
No less,—no less by reason of my sin,  
I loved him—dearer than my life itself !  
But when I thought that I might no more hold  
A place unshamed among my fellow maids,  
Nor any more be crowned by them, with buds  
Of lilies, gathered in their kirtles green,  
Lest each white virgin-flower should wither up  
Upon my guilty brow,—when morn by morn,  
I knew how suns and moons would rise and set,  
Winter and summer bring the long years round,

But never, never, never a return  
Of the proud spotless insolence of youth,—  
My punishment began. . . .

He went away  
To the great war in Flanders : and in days  
Of maddest grief that followed, I became  
A mother. In her arms with bitter tears  
The aged woman who had nursed me once  
Now held my child, and he was borne away—  
My boy—my own sweet babe ! who knew me not.  
Nor never might a mother's blessing know—  
Borne safe from prying eyes and babbling tongues  
Safe from a father's wrath, beyond the hills.  
And to my father some pretence was made  
That I was sick'ning of the tertian plague,  
And no one save one faithful maid, and she,  
That aged nurse, came near me. Thus from men  
My shame was secret ; and a year rolled by.

“ A year rolled by, and Death came striding on  
Mowing down young and old, and high and low ;  
On one hand, Hope rose smiling as he passed,  
And on the other weeping went Despair.  
Over against my window rose a hill,  
And on its topmost crest a tow'r was set,  
(A blot of purple 'gainst the sunset sky)  
And in that tow'r they brought me word, lay dead  
My true Knight's brother, childless, and alone. . . .  
God pardon me ! . . . I wept aloud for joy,  
To think how in the dead man's place, my Love  
Should reign, and I become his honoured bride,

And have my baby back again, and all  
*The past be blotted out.* So, outwardly  
It came to pass, indeed ; for he returned,  
And from my father straightway sought my hand,  
And we were married.

On that very night,  
Just such another starlit night as this,  
While yet in hall the revelry was loud,  
My Lord still pledging, as in honour bound,  
His boisterous guests, I stole away to where  
The stars made doubtful twilight on the wall.  
Then, as I mused, the shadow of the nurse  
Beside me sudden fell ; and lo ! She stooped  
And plucked me by the sleeve, and hoarsely said,  
' Come to yon wood, and I will show thee that  
I dared not tell thee sooner.'

Then we trod  
Along the dusky thicket, till we came  
Unto this little mound, the nurse and I.  
' Here lies '—she spake in murmurs low—' the child ;  
Dead three months since . . . and it is better so.'  
I did not rave or shriek. I did not fall.  
From crown to foot I shook, and all the blood  
Froze round my heart. O God ! and thus it was  
My prayer was heard ! *The past was blotted out.*  
Never to see my babe on earth, of whom  
I dreamt each night, his little golden head  
Smiling between the silver clouds—and now,—  
And now ! to think that at my feet he lay,  
Wrapped in the brown earth's arms instead of mine—  
And I had never e'en beheld his eyes,

And should not know his little voice among  
The angels' choir ! . . . Ah ! cruelly, indeed,  
My prayer was heard—*my past was blotted out*.  
Earth keeps her secrets well. No fear that mound  
In the wild wood should tell my shame to men ;  
But I was childless ! all my sorrow,—all,  
Was nothing unto this. I walked away. . . .  
I walked away, my face between my hands ;  
And now 'twas very night : the stars were hid ;  
And as I walked the cruel dread grew strong  
Within my soul, that in that little grave  
My hopes on earth lay buried. . . .

There was yet

Another grief in store for me, good Sir,  
Which women who have fallen as I fell  
May haply learn. Into my Lord's deep eyes,  
I, looking for the passionate love that burned of yore,  
Found nothing but a poor sad counterfeit,  
An honourable subterfuge through which  
The soul of Chivalry redeemed its pledge,  
And wedded me. . . . Alas ! it might be now,  
That I was changed, grown white and wan : my lip  
Had lost its trick of smiling, and my voice  
Carolled no longer, when upon his arm  
I leant, as down the garden's length we paced.  
And yet, I loved him better, clung to him  
More closely now than ever, would have spurned  
All other love. . . . But one dark cruel thought  
Like a black bough across a pool, kept out  
All sunshine from my heart. The child was dead !  
The little life, whose leaves in darkness blown,

Might have expanded on a mother's breast,  
Was gone—the only child that I should bear—  
I knew it, and I could not smile, and thus  
His love grew further from me ev'ry day,  
And my life's burthen heavier to lift,  
I could not blame him if the scent was fled  
From the poor flower he had plucked,—too soon,—  
And now wore openly i' his breast. My Lord  
Was ever gentle, kind, and patient ;  
But the old glamour of my eyes for him  
Was dead ; and while I strove, and strove to be  
The thing I was not, wider ev'ry day  
I felt my frail bark drifting from the shore  
That should have been my haven !

From my tow'r

I watched this wood of pines ; and stole each morn  
Unseen, with flowers, to where my babe lay hid.  
The months unrolled themselves to years : no hope  
Blossomed again upon my barren boughs ;  
While peasants' overladen orchards flung  
Their rosy fruit beneath my castle wall,  
I—I alone had no more fruit wherewith  
To win my Lord's affection back to me !  
And thus at last (but not till I had prayed  
Morning and night) the frost struck at the root  
Of this poor sapless tree. Grown old and grey  
Before my time, what marvel that my Lord  
Sought other women, fair and full of grace,  
While ever bearing gently with me still  
And my sad humours ? It was time to die :  
For I was weary of my life, since all

That made it sweet was taken. Gossips' tongues  
Should wag no more reproaches, that my Lord's  
Inheritance must pass to distant hands,  
When I was gone, and interchange of smiles  
Could never vex my heart within the tomb.  
And so I died. The mourners, two and two,  
Bore me with pomp to the cathedral spire,  
(I might not sleep beside my babe, alas !)  
Where 'neath a fretted canopy I lay,  
In the great church forgotten and alone.

"Stranger, three hundred years are past, and more ;  
My Lord, and all his line of heirs, long since  
Are gathered to the dust : yon keep alone  
Tells of their greatness. Yet, within this wood,  
Where in my life I suffered, loved, and sinned,  
Where for long years my footsteps daily turned,  
And joy lay compassed in three feet of earth,  
Here, round this spot, one night in every year  
'Tis given my soul to wander, and to tell  
The old, old story of my griefs to whom  
I find here. All who, sinning as I sinned,  
Mourn with repentant tears, and turn to Christ,  
Shall learn one day how crosses borne in life  
In death are reared to bring us nearer Heav'n."

She said ; and fading from me as she spake,  
I turned, astonished. . . . To my feet I sprang,  
From the soft turf whereon I lay, and saw,  
Between the interlacing leaves, the morn  
Lifting her head already o'er the hill.

## KING CHILDERIC IN THE CLOISTER.

A.D. 750.

**G**OD give me patience, miserable king  
 That am, beneath the cowl ! on whom the sun  
 Shines but one hour a day, when slanting through  
 These cloister-arches : where my sandalled feet  
 Break the grey moss-grown silence of the flags—  
 I, that was wont to meet the sun at morn,  
 And take my pleasure, as became a king,  
 In sports, all day, across the plain. Woe's me !  
 How changed am I !—seems all, that yet's unchanged !  
 The same wind that, through purple curtains, scarce  
 Lifted the rushes from my palace floor,  
 In the old time, around a bare damp cell  
 Now freezes all my bones. Ah ! hunger, thirst,  
 Vigil and painful penance, come to none  
 Of these poor monks so hardly as to me.  
 For one hath left his vineyard by the Rhine,  
 To whom, as he was delving on a day,  
 The blessed Mary showed herself : and one,  
 A poor aureficer in Aix, whose house  
 The plague left desolate. From mountain-hut,  
 Or camp, or city, come they hither ; led  
 By that strong inward voice, men christened Faith,  
 But, like me, none . . . Well, well, and so, because  
 I shun their simple talk of beeves and goats,

They whisper, that by reason of some crime  
 Hanging like mill-stone round me, am I come  
 To expiate the past. And here, in truth,  
 I pace the flags each day ; and muse, as oft  
 I watch the spiders weave athwart the wall  
 Their silken death-nets for the foolish flies,  
 " So weaved his webs around my helpless youth,  
 Th' unloyal crafty head, where sits my crown :  
 Founder, methinks, of a long line of kings."  
 For so I dreamed last night it is decreed,  
 The Merovingian race should pass away  
 For ever,—*sicut herba transeat*—  
 Then these in turn, gave place, their work being done.  
 The builder setteth up, and pulleth down,  
 Building his tow'r. We are but stocks and stones  
 Shaped to his mighty purpose.

Hark ! the bell

Rings in to vespers ; and the brothers pass  
 Down the side-cloister, eyeing me askance.  
 Sweet sunshine—bird, upon the cloister roof,  
 Farewell until to-morrow. Now they sing,  
 "*Ecce quam bonum habitare est*  
*Fratres in unum.*" . . . . What a mock'ry 'tis !



GEORGE LEE.

“CHIVALRY is dead among us !”  
 So sigh those who read the tale  
 Of Arthur and his Knights. They wrong us.

Not alone to knights in mail  
 Does that noble self-disdain,  
 That recks not peril, strife, and pain  
 In succour of the oppressed, pertain.

There are now, too, lives sublime,  
 Heroes (let us thank God for it !)

Whose bright deeds, from time to time,  
 Cast a glow on these our days—  
 Some like beacons from a turret,

Some uplighting lowly ways.  
 Listen, while I tell the story

Of a humble man, George Lee,  
 Who, in life unknown to glory,

Will in death remembered be,  
 By the men 'mong whom he died,  
 Their example and their pride.

“FIRE, FIRE, FIRE !”

THAT dread cry in dead of night  
 Rouses the sleepers with affright,  
 Adown the narrow squalid street ;  
 And while men stumble to their feet,

And snatch their earnings up with oaths,  
Wives clasp their babes and tattered clothes,  
And all run out into the ways,  
On which the lurid firelight plays.  
The faces of that crowd show plain  
Starvation, misery, and pain :  
Strange that to this sad life they cling  
As much as placid priest, or king  
    Upon his throne may do ! Along  
The street, from every open door  
And court and alley, fresh streams pour,  
    To swell the dense excited throng.  
The cry is " Water ! " now. Below  
    The doomed house press the serried ranks,  
    And pass the buckets from the tanks ;  
While the bewildered inmates throw  
All they can into the street.  
The crowd screams out, " Come down ! A sheet  
Of flame is rising, and the smoke  
Grows dense ! Come down before it choke  
Your breath ! " " Where are the engines ? See !  
    It spreads ! God help us ! Not alone  
This house ; the entire street will be  
A blaze if they are long delayed !  
    There's ne'er a hope for us but one—  
The fire-brigade, the fire-brigade ! "

Hark !—God be thanked !—at last ! D'you hear  
That distant roar that grows more near ?  
" Fire, fire, fire ! " as on they tear  
Down the close streets ; for dear life rushing,

Like a coal-black steed that is spurred to death,—  
To right, to left, the people crushing,—  
Sending sparks from its fiery breath,  
The engine comes panting. Its riders draw up  
Where the flames, now mounting to heaven, glow  
On the pavement of human heads below,  
And water is poured as into a cup,  
On the seething walls and molten glass ;  
And a smoke, as of hell, sweeps over all.  
They have set the escape against the wall :  
“There’s never a soul there, mates?” cries Lee,  
The fireman ; (he who, three days hence  
With his strong right arm for competence,  
Shall wed the girl he has loved from a boy—  
Gallant George Lee, his comrades’ joy).

“No soul within?” The crowd cries, “None !”  
But e’en while they answer one halloos, “See,  
There’s a woman up there, in the topmost room !”  
Yes, at an open window, alone,  
Looming out black against the glare,  
Stands a shadow of hopeless, dull despair,  
With folded hands, foreseeing her doom—  
She is face to face with death.

One minute  
Lee looks at her and the escape, no more ;  
Then through the smoke that blinds the door  
He springs over burning stair and floor,  
Up to the roof, if he can but win it.  
With tight-clenched lips that breathe no word,  
Scorched and blinded, yet undeterred,  
He struggles on. From below, men, seeing

The whole house now is one blazing stack,  
Cry out, "It's never no use ! Come back !"  
But what is peril to sight or limb

If the life of a helpless human being  
Has yet a chance to be saved by him ?

So through the fumes that now oppress him,  
Fainting, falling, he beats his way  
To the room where the woman stands at bay,

With the flames, like bloodhounds, licking the edge  
Of the window. They cry, "He's safe ! God bless  
him !"

Is he safe ? He has reached her, seized her, stands  
With her form in his arms on the parapet-ledge.

Men hold their breath ; the sight appals  
The stoutest hearts, for he reels ; his hands  
Cannot reach the escape. "O God in heaven,  
Let him not die !" That prayer is given  
With all men's hearts. He grasps a cleft  
In the burning bricks, with just strength left

To save the woman, and then he falls !  
A scream of horror runs down the street :  
George Lee lies dead at the people's feet !

Children, ere you sleep to-night

In your cots secure from fear,  
Think of those brave men who fight  
For your lives when peril's near.

Other soldiers war with men ;  
These with fire,—a lowlier trade—  
For their fellow-citizen,  
Fight the fight of their brigade.

At your nursery window-sill  
 Stand, and think, ere lying down,  
 When the lonely streets are still,  
 How they guard the sleeping town.

Children, ask not of your Father  
 Honour, glory, length of days ;  
 There is something I had rather  
 You possessed, worth more than praise  
 Of men or worldly profit. Ask  
 For heart of grace and strength of will  
 To be true heroes, and fulfil,  
 Like this man, each his daily task ;  
 Living for others—dying too  
 Without a murmur, if need be.  
 Bear him in mind : I breathe for you  
 No better hope—be like George Lee !



## THE NIGHT BEFORE THE BATTLE.

## I.

I LEFT my tent at midnight,  
 And stood on a little hill,  
 The moon burned red in heaven,  
 And the camp lay husht and still ;

## II.

Save by the hourly tramping  
 Of the picket on its beat,  
 The sentinel's sharp challenge,  
 As he paced the canvas street.

## III.

The hour, from one to another  
 Cried with a clear "All's well !"  
 The curse of uneasy dreamers,  
 Tossing with shot and shell.

## IV.

All else was frosty silent :  
 I thought on to-morrow's fight ;  
 How, when its heat was over,  
 Would return the quiet night.

V.

And I wondered, "Will those white tents  
Be shining there the same?"  
Then slowly riding through them,  
A sable horseman came.

VI.

Clad in the ancient armour,  
His vizor closed he kept,  
Unchallenged by the sentinel,  
Full in the moonlight swept.

VII.

His charger's hoof, I marvelled,  
No ringing echo sent.  
Sudden the horseman reined him up,  
Before my captain's tent.

VIII.

I spake in fear, "What art thou?  
Nor guardsman, nor dragoon,  
That ridest thus in armour clad  
Under the midnight moon?"

IX.

Then sighed a voice in answer,  
Between his vizor's bands,  
Like wind among the rushes  
Along the river sands.

## X.

"My name," he said, "thou knowest,  
My face shalt one day see ;  
I come to choose the gallant men  
Who to-morrow ride with me !"

## XI.

I cried (and from my forehead  
The drops of anguish fall) :  
"O Rider ! now I know thee well—  
Thou who o'ertakest all,

## XII.

"Or soon or late :—but that brave man,  
Oh, let him ride the plain,  
To cheer his troop from battle back,  
And lead them forth again !"

## XIII.

The horseman sighed for answer :  
His charger reared apace ;  
Like sea-spray, as he snorted, flashed  
The foam-flakes by my face.

## XIV.

Then, on a little further,  
I heard him say to one,  
Who slept the sleep of sweet eighteen :  
"Before to-morrow's sun

XV.

“Sink, with the tide of battle  
In scarlet o’er the town,  
Meet me in yonder hollow,  
When the Cossack charges down.”

XVI.

“O spare, at least, that boy !” I cried,  
“Life’s ride has just begun  
For him, so full of life and pride—  
His mother’s only son !

XVII.

“A widow she, who liveth  
In his letters, week by week ;  
News flasht along the wires  
Of this fight will blanch her cheek

XVIII.

“Through days of anxious watching,  
Till she learn the list of slain.” . . .  
The horseman shook his mournful plume,  
The charger tossed his mane.

XIX.

Then to a distant watch-fire,  
Where Highlanders stood round,  
And one, his head upon his hand,  
Sat, thinking, on the ground,

## XX.

Wrapt in the plaid of his own hills,  
Where now his thoughts are flown.  
The horseman turned his mailed hand,  
And spake in hollow tone :

## XXI.

“When the rushing tide of bayonets  
Breaks crested up yon height,  
And wide-mouthed cannon thunder down  
Their welcomes left and right,

## XXII.

“I wait thee by the shallow ford,  
When cheering on thy men ;  
Flash all the waters round thine eyes,—  
Up to my saddle then !

## XXIII.

“And we will ride to a quiet place” . . .  
“Ah, cruel !” I burst forth,  
“That fallen Highlander will leave  
Wide blank in the far north !

## XXIV.

“Seest thou, in that peaceful home,  
A fair and patient wife,  
Teaching three children, at her knee,  
To pray for ‘father’s life ?’

XXV.

"Hast thou no pity?" . . . Tow'rds a tent  
That stood apart he turned,  
Where paced a sentry, and a lamp  
Behind the canvas burned.

XXVI.

The horseman gazed in silence ;  
Then, with a heavy sigh,  
"Old man," he said, "the time is come  
To lay thine armour by.

XXVII.

"Now forty years since first I stood  
Over thee, on the plain,  
When thou, in charging, wounded fell,  
Upon the fields of Spain.

XXVIII.

"And since that time, through years, till thou  
A wider fame did'st reach,  
Commanding where thy sword first led  
Forlorn hopes to the breach.

XXIX.

"My charger's hoofs have often flasht  
A stone's-throw from thy head :  
And now, at last, thy day is come !"  
"Welcome to him !" I said.

XXX.

“To such as he, oh terrible  
     Dark rider ! through the world,  
 Thou com'st not ill, upon the wings  
     Of the rushing battle whirled.

XXXI.

“In such as he, the flame that burned  
     Through long life to renown,  
 Is better blown out suddenly,  
     Than flickering slowly down

XXXII.

“In a leaden socket, day by day ;  
     Fitter for all such ones,  
 Their veteran souls should march away,  
     To the music of the guns.

XXXIII.

“Tribute of reverential tears  
     Be paid them when they fall ;  
 But oh ! from these, far spent upon  
     Life's journey, choose thou all

XXXIV.

“Who ride to-morrow out of sight,  
     In mist—whate'er their worth—  
 Spare us the flower of our youth,  
     With such strong roots on earth !

XXXV.

“Spare us” . . . Then sudden rang a blast  
The glimmering white tents through ;  
And down them faded, as I gazed,  
The Horseman from my view.

XXXVI.

I started—from a feverish sleep,  
The dawn was breaking grey ;  
The shrill reveille roused the camp  
To life, once more, that day.



## VOISIN ET VOISINE.

## I.

**L**A matinée est belle,  
 Au dessus des lilas  
 La première hirondelle  
 Plonge dans l'air là bas.  
 Si je regarde à travers toîts, peut-être  
 Je verrai ma voisine, à sa fenêtre.  
 Je l'aperçois . . . . Dans le ciel du matin  
 Je vois briller son front pur et mutin.  
 "Bonjour ! Le Printemps est venu, ma chère !  
 N'irons nous pas tous les deux  
 Au pays des amoureux ?"  
 "Pour m'en aller si loin j'ai trop à faire.  
 Quand j'aurai fini mon travail, ce soir  
 J'écouterai . . . . mon voisin, au revoir !"

## II.

Le soir, de ma fenêtre  
 Je guette, à mon retour.  
 Ma belle va paraître  
 Avant la fin du jour.  
 Oh, si j'étais l'hirondelle qui passe,  
 J'aurais déjà cent fois franchi l'espace . . . .

Mais la voilà, qui se coiffe au miroir  
En face, et qui feint de ne pas me voir !

“ Bonsoir, voisine, . . . . Oh ! que la nuit est belle !

N’irons nous pas tous les deux

Au pays des amoureux ? ”

“ Pour marcher la nuit, c’est trop loin, ” dit elle.

“ Et je suis bien lasse . . . . il est tard ce soir . . . .

Demain, peut-être . . . . Voisin, au revoir ! ”

Sept., 1879.







MISCELLANEOUS.





## A ROMAN TOMB.

ONE starlit night, upon the Appian way  
 I stood, amongst the tombs of ancient Rome,  
 The nameless monuments of men who lay  
 Gathered to their last home.

Mighty in life, haply they here had raised  
 Stones that should tell, when they were under-  
 ground,  
 Of the great names that flatterers had praised,  
 And Poets' lays had crowned.

Ambition, Pride, all sensual delights  
 That bind the soul in leaden chains to earth,  
 Once filled the measure of their days and nights—  
 What lives to show their worth?

How much to rouse our sympathy and love,  
 In what is left of those world-famous men,  
 The conquerors in the field, or they who strove  
 To conquer with the pen?

What but the stinging verse of satires bought  
 And sold, to flay a friend with fatal ease?  
 The cirque, where men were slain by beasts for sport :  
 What monuments but these?

What, in the name of all their gods of stone,  
But polished plinths of temples raised to lust,  
Triumphal arch or portico o'erthrown?  
Dust back again to dust!

In every form, self-worship and self-love;  
Passions in marble deified with grace;  
The cultured arts, like fruitage, carved above  
A quickly-crumbled base.

The spirit fled—the informing fire is cold.  
And herein lies the difference between  
The ruin of the things that we behold,  
And of the things unseen.

While the rude stones up-built by peasant hands  
Mark where the shattered cross once held control,  
The spirit there, Time's cruel scythe withstands,—  
Soul answers still to soul.

But not so here. I said: when through the gloom  
(Cold horror seized and held me there, I wist),  
Methought the headless Roman on his tomb,  
Moved in the moonlight mist.

The arm was slowly raised wherewith he held  
His toga's folds; and in the very place  
Where the stone head erst stood, I now beheld  
A pale, stern Roman face.

Then from those lips, as when a night-wind grows  
Among the reeds on Thrasimene's cold lake,  
In Latin tongue, a hollow voice arose,  
And murmuring hoarsely spake.

"Mortal, now twice ten hundred years are past,  
Com'st thou to vex the ashes in my urn,  
With all thy vain and shallow wisdom, cast  
On the great names that burn

"In the world's temple, like fed-lamps of old?  
Let none, presumptuous, dare to quench the light,  
Because the growing centuries behold  
The dawn succeed to night.

"The dawn; not yet the day! The vapours curled  
But slowly rise; and ignorance's cloud  
Which the All-wise hath laid upon His world,  
Doth half mankind enshroud.

"And He whom blindly we adored as Jove,  
O thou vain Mortal, was it not His will  
That knowledge feebly scales the stair above,  
Higher and higher still?

"We found the world barbarian: is it nought,  
That where we trod, arts sprang beneath our feet?  
The tales of virtue and of valour wrought,  
Your children still repeat.

“ Who framed just laws, to govern Kings and crafts ?  
Who made the streams from hill to hill to flow ?  
Through Europe's heart who drove the roads, like  
shafts  
Shot from a mighty bow ?

“ The fierceness, wolf-imbibed, of all our race,  
Made half the world the Roman Eagle's home.  
From Greeks, we borrowed poetry and grace,  
Our arms belonged to Rome !

“ And if the antique virtue ceased to shine,  
In days when I had long been out of sight,  
Did Rome but share the natural decline  
Of all things at their height ?

“ For peace is kin to luxury : they sank  
By slow degrees, those latter men, supine,  
Rose-garlanded, inglorious, as they drank  
The red Falernian wine,

“ Cool from their grottos by the tideless sea,  
Where mantled round with pine and olive wood,  
With gardens, baths, and fishponds fair to see,  
Their stately villas stood.

“ Feasting on Lucrine oysters, or the fruit  
Of many a distant sea, while boys in praise  
Of love, their voices mingled with the lute,  
In soft emasculate lays.

“ Not such our lives ! We fed, in days of old,  
With less refinement, and had rougher games ;  
Our sterner measures, Saturnine and bold,  
Had nobler, worthier aims.

“ We sang the God-like hero in his urn ;  
We crowned the living Victory with bays ;  
We worshipped Mars ; and Justice, blind and stern,  
Sat in our open ways.

“ To prove the public virtues in this life, —  
Stands not the Ædile’s tomb unto this hour ?  
And, as a monument to wedded wife,  
Behold Metella’s tower !

“ The Vineyard, where the Scipios’ ashes lie,  
And linked with them, that motherhood, whose  
name,  
While Gracchus is remembered, shall not die,  
Old Roman worth proclaim.

“ And there are memories, greater e’en than these,  
Embalmed in History, their graves unknown ;  
While soon or late, Time’s ruthless hand doth seize  
The perishable stone.

“ The stone that mocks for some few hundred years  
The honoured relics, gathered ’neath that tomb,  
Raised by a loving hand, with pious tears,  
Over—ye know not whom !

“Such lot is mine. A lucky flight of birds  
Presaged my birth : my life was crowned with fame,  
Men in the forum ever met my words  
With reverent acclaim.

“They made me Prætor : placed on high my bust;  
And when for ever I had passed away,  
The city trailed their garments in the dust,  
With covered heads that day.

“They bare my ashes here : the Senate raised  
This sculptured marble, which hath long survived  
The recollection of the man it praised,  
—A memory so short-lived !

“Why doth it cumber still the ground ?” And here  
The hollow voice grew tremulous with scorn.  
“To point a moral, obvious and clear,  
To ages yet unborn ?

“*That builded tombs, and all the strong desire  
To be remembered after death is vain.*  
The centres of small systems that expire  
With us, our souls sustain

“The conscious loss of all that pride believed  
Should keep us living through the future years :  
We learn, O Mortal, how we were deceived,  
When the hot bitter tears

“Shed by those few whose lives were bound with ours,  
Or wife’s or freedman’s—(since we only know  
In death what depth of root have Love’s fair flowers)—  
When these have ceased to flow,

“Oblivion quickly gathers round our lives :  
The spade may strike some urn that tells of Fame,  
But of the struggle of that life survives  
Naught save an empty name !

“Our Race is passed away. At dead of night  
The Master called us ; and we did His will.  
Ye, who through widening avenues of light  
Are gathering knowledge still,

“Who, to the Past’s accumulated wealth,  
Add, day by day, fresh stores that inward roll,  
The large experience that bringeth health  
And wisdom to the soul,

“Learn yet one thing. He who is wise above,  
Leadeth in every age His children home ;  
And He, beholding, something found to love,  
Even in Pagan Rome.”



## MOUNTAINS.

O MOUNTAINS ! inaccessible, nigh Heaven,  
 We gaze in wonder,  
 Hearing your deep mysterious answers given  
 To God's voice, Thunder.

Ye seem to hold communion with the Immortal :  
 First on your summit,  
 The fiery steeds, let loose from Heaven's portal,  
 Strive to o'ercome it.

And while in impotent wrath they split the pine roots,  
 And downwards hunt them,  
 Tearing up valleys where the tender vine shoots,  
 Unmoved, ye front them.

Unmoved, regard the tongue of fire that splinters  
 Forests beneath ye ;  
 Your crowns, impearled with snow of countless winters,  
 Still proudly wreath ye.

Ye drink the sunshine in your morning revels  
 While we are sleeping,  
 And stars invisible at lower levels,  
 Their vigils keeping,

In nebulous depths of blue, to your keen focus,  
Are ever patent ;  
Yet know ye, Mountains, more than the gold crocus  
At your feet latent ?

Have ye the knowledge of a Power sustaining,  
More deep and serious,  
Than thrills throughout its delicate gold veining,  
With sense mysterious ?

Wist ye what mighty Arm, O Rocks ! have driven  
Those snow-flakes o'er ye ?  
When, to their base, surrounding hills were riven,  
What hands up-bore ye ?

Have ye more knowledge of the Love that showers  
Its dew caressing,  
Than the small weeds that lift their thankful flowers  
To drink the blessing ?

Image of intellectual power, the glory  
Of Man's endeavour,  
In your great solitudes, O Mountains hoary,  
Are ye for ever !

Breathing an atmosphere of rarer essence,  
The ages show them,  
Sending the shadow of their mighty presence  
On all below them.

And in those heights where soars the eagle only,  
From our eyes clouded,  
The pride of human intellect dwells lonely,  
With mists enshrouded.

Striving to reach that yet unfathomed power,  
Insight not given—  
What fuller knowledge than the humblest flower  
Has it of Heaven?

Of that great Love pervading all creation,  
Uncomprehended?  
The subtle problem of our destination,  
When life is ended?

Knowledge of "Power and Glory" never ending  
To whom is given?  
Are not the heights and depths of understanding  
Herein made even?

The lessons, these, O Mountains, that ye teach  
If men receive them;  
The loftiest human intellect cannot reach  
The low—believe them!



## THE RIVER OF MY DREAM.

**M**ETHOUGHT I stood beside a city's River,  
 That like an arrow through its bosom shot  
 Black with the poisoned tide of sins for ever,  
 Salt with the tears of sorrow long forgot.

What human burthens underneath lay buried?  
 I watched the crowd of swimmers struggling there ;  
 And while the dark Stream never stayed nor hurried,  
 It closed each instant o'er some life-despair.

Silently closed ;—but ere the circling eddy  
 Had widened full its rings, to fill the place,  
 Another form was striking out already,  
 Till the Stream clasped him in its black embrace.

And prayers, and curses, and a wail for ever,  
 Swept, like a wind, beneath the arches dim ;  
 Souls battling on, each with his small endeavour,  
 Each to the separate goal foredoomed for him !

All men,—all ages,—young and very old,  
 The sad, the wicked, and the innocent,  
 Some sank beneath their cherished weight of gold,  
 Some 'neath a weight of human learning bent.

First came the children, with their day-break eyes  
Wide set, that went resistless down the stream,  
Their tiny fingers catching at the flies  
And water-lilies. 'Twas a summer's dream

For them, the rushing of the waters now!  
Till one, the brightest, loveliest, most brave,  
Dropped all his starry treasures, and his brow  
Circled in glory, sank beneath the wave.

An anguished mother with despairing gesture  
Reached after him—in vain! . . Yet happier they  
Who sink serenely thus, in spotless vesture,  
Before the burthen and the heat of day!

Yes! happier far than *those*—once dearly prized,  
The faded shapes of what were erst so fair,  
And flattered,—now forgotten and despised,  
With bloodless lips, and wild entangled hair,

Who cried for help, and up the oozy bank  
Clutched at the weeds—then sliding backwards, fell;  
—Others, more happy, landed there, and sank  
Among the flowery fields of asphodel:

Lapt in luxurious dreams, of powerless will  
To breast the current; letting the gold sand  
Of Life slip through their languid fingers still,  
They lay, forgetful of the promised Land!

Forgetful that the roaring water-course  
Is Man's inheritance ; that only he  
Shall win that Land, whose firm persistent force  
Cleaves on, with stroke unwearied, to the sea.

And lo! beside them and the rushing River  
Were bleaching skeletons, whose life-decay,  
Without one action towards the great "For Ever,"  
Had crumbled slowly into dust away.

Thus crumbled now these idle lives of fashion,  
While earnest swimmers in the heat and strife,  
Through swiftest currents of fierce human passion,  
Were struggling onwards to the Better Life.

Sometimes they sank, amid the foaming water :—  
But even thus, methought, O ! better far,  
To fall, like men, o'ercome in human slaughter,  
Than coldly gaze, like statues, from afar.

And some my straining eyesight followed keenly,  
The heroes,—nameless though in life they be,  
Floating in evening's golden light serenely  
Down to the marge of an unfathomed sea.

Further I saw not ; but the sunbeams quiver  
On that extremest margin ! and I knew,  
The stains and sorrows of the Human River,  
No more were seen in the Eternal blue !

## THE THREE MAIDENS.

**I** SAW three Maidens, sitting in a wood.  
 A thorn, a Judas-tree, and laurel, green  
 With never-dying hope, spread their dark shade  
 Over them, and a runnel at their feet  
 Laughed over pebbles, and a sand that gleamed  
 Like silver, where the sun, 'thwart the black boughs,  
 Smote it. Of these, one wore a vermeil robe,  
 With creamy points of Venice lace, and knots  
 Of pearl, that matched her sanguine cheek, clear eyes,  
 Clear brow, red lips, and crisply-golden hair :  
 And on her wrist, she bore a falcon, fain  
 To soar and swoop on all the singing-birds  
 Around ; only her hand held tight the jess,  
 And smoothed the feathers of the warlike bird.  
 The next, in yellow ; pale, with dusky braids  
 Slipt from their net ; and in her hand a flower  
 Of Nightshade ; motionless, a bitter smile  
 Upon her lip. The third, from head to foot  
 White-robed ; a star-shaped blossom on her breast,  
 And in her hand a mandolin, whereon  
 Her fingers swept a tune, like wind, at times ;  
 At others, dipping a blue jar that stood  
 By her, she drew the crystal up that flowed  
 Over the pebbles and the silver sand.  
 Yet none, I marked, drank of it—only she.

Then spake the first. "My Knight is far away ;  
Gone to the Wars ; he would not bide with me,  
Loving to hurl his blows about, and win  
Fame, better than to lay his head upon  
A woman's lap, through the long summer-days. . . .  
Why should I weep ? I cannot bind him fast,  
Like you, my gallant bird. I should not love  
My Knight without his honour ; and that grows  
Only in tented fields, with peril plucked. . . .  
And yet, if any ill, or hurt, befell  
Him, so that he should not return, what good  
Were my life unto me ? For all I have  
Belongs to him ; and out of him, have I  
Nor Hope, nor Faith, upon this earth, nor yet  
Beyond the grave, where they shall carry him."

The second laughed : " My Knight is far away.  
A woman took him from me with her wiles,  
Deadly as poison in the flower I hold ;  
And now he lies, drowned in her arms, and deaf  
To plighted love, true honour, knightly faith ! . . .  
Why should I weep ? I hold all men alike ;  
War hath made false *your* Knight, a woman, mine.  
I smile,—recalling every oath he swore  
To love me, only me—that twilight-time  
We stood among the vineyards, he and I :  
'Tis such a jest, this phantasy called Love !  
Neither in this world, nor the next, shall I  
Behold his face,—yet would I give my life  
To meet *her* here, alone, one moonless hour,  
In the dark wood—so should I die content ! "

Then spake the third: "My Knight is far away :  
Yet know I neither fear, nor jealous wrath ;  
For he is safe from earthly evils now.  
Him can no arrow from an arbalist  
In the hot noon of life smite down ; no face  
Of a strange woman send its shadow 'twixt  
His heart and mine. He is in Paradise,  
And we shall meet there, by and by, I know ;  
For in the garden is a place for me,  
Which he is keeping ; if I drink, through life,  
Of this pure stream, the water of true Faith,  
And hold my heart unspotted from the world."

And she whose Knight lay dead, I held to be  
Blest even now—and happiest of the three.



## THE PORTRAIT CLASPED IN SILVER.

THE white-faced moon looked out  
 From the riven clouds of night,  
 And beheld two figures struggling  
 In fierce and deadly fight.

The dark was dowered with beauty,  
 The fair was nobly born ;  
 In the face of the one was hatred,  
 In the face of the other, scorn.

Both men were tall, broad-chested,  
 And lithe of limb, and sound ;  
 And like bands of knotted iron,  
 Their arms, were together wound.

Till in that mortal wrestle,  
 From the neck of the fair man fell  
 A portrait, clasped in silver,  
 The dark man knew full well.

With a ghastly smile he snatched it  
 And then his right hand felt  
 For a poniard's handle, which he plucked  
 From out of his rival's belt.

But the scornful eyes of the other  
Heeded nor weapon nor clasp,  
As his naked fingers grappled  
That throat in their deadly grasp !

The white-faced moon looked out  
From the riven clouds of night,  
And beheld the two men tottering  
On the brink of a dizzy height.

The fair man's fingers tightened,  
Till the dark eyes started wide ;  
But the dark man drove his poniard  
Home in the fair man's side.

One slip in the blood-stained heather,—  
One cry of a sharp despair,—  
Then over they rolled, and over,  
Down the face of the sea-cliff bare !

One splash in the foaming water,—  
One sweep of the wave—and then  
The secret of love and hatred  
Was safe from the ears of men !

The white-faced moon gazed out  
From the riven clouds of night,  
And the portrait clasped in silver,  
Lay there on the rocky height.

## THE DESERTED VILLA.

A DEWY morn with sunlight on the hills ;  
 Bees humming everywhere through thyme  
 and sage ;

Her white mule in the stable ; and the cage  
 Of singing linnets on the window-sill.  
 Awake ; . . . He sees the chamber door ajar.—  
 “Where is my Beatrice, my morning star ?

“Where does she linger, who was wont to rise  
 With bird and flower ?” He pushes back the door :  
 Her veil is gone, her missal on the floor.  
 He calls, and calls again—no voice replies.  
 Through all the empty rooms his footsteps stray  
 Hour after hour. Noon burns itself away.

The dead still heat of noon, when nothing stirs  
 Save shrill cicalas through the grass ; a thread  
 Of water in the dried-up river's bed,  
 A cloud of road-dust 'twixt the vines and firs.  
 He stares, in vain, along that road's white band,  
 Crushing the o'er-head jasmines with his hand.

Then golden sunset dripping down through boughs,  
 And wide-horned oxen lowing to their rest,  
 Blue shadows creeping up the soft hill's breast,  
 And lemon-odours wafted round the house :

But human voice and footfall silent both—  
He kicks aside the spaniel with an oath !

And round and round the house, all through the night,  
The moon his profile on the wall defines,  
Angry and black in passionate bold lines.  
Morn breaks. The dream is over, wild and bright ;  
The wrong, the jealous tyranny—all flown !  
The dreamer wakes, to find himself alone.

Nor ever more did she return. Still stands  
The gate a-rusted with the wind and rain,  
Fig and pomegranate choke the window-pane,  
The mule and linnets passed to other hands !  
O'ergrown the garden all, with long rank grass—  
You see it from the high road as you pass.



## AN EVENING'S WALK. ALBANO.

## I.

DOWN on the sunset-ledge, one heron veers  
 Towards the green-blue lake,  
 Fluffing along its surface, where the spears  
 Of flags and rushes shake.

## II.

The heats and fiery winds have died their death,  
 In silence calm and deep,  
 As in hot passion, angry gusts of breath  
 Are hushed to gradual sleep.

## III.

'Neath Palazzola's monastery wall,  
 Franciscan monks we see,  
 Sitting beneath their thick-leaved laurels tall,  
 Idle as boys might be.

## IV.

How strange that active men can think that ease  
 With "aves" marked, is blest !  
 That only prayer and meditation please  
 A God who knows no rest !

## V.

We wander on, until the silver leaves  
 The sea that sunset lies on,  
 And the sharp outline of Soracte cleaves  
 The golden-grey horizon.

## VI.

In its cold shadow sleeps the lake, one side  
The height whereon we stand :  
The other, Rome's campagna, stretching wide  
Its sunburnt wrinkled hand.

## VII.

St. Peter's dome, with campaniles girt,  
Far as may reach the eye,  
Hangs, like a burnisht drop, upon the skirt  
Of the clear opal sky.

## VIII.

Then, from Gandolfo's castle of the Popes  
We turn our steps, adown  
Through Barberini's terraces and slopes,  
Back to Albano's town.



## SONNET.

AS one who, walking on a summer day  
 'Neath branching trees, afar from the noon glare,  
 Seeth no sun, but noteth, here and there,  
 A beam that makes the flickering foliage gay :  
 So I, whose footsteps far from thee must stray,  
 Down thickset paths, where the sun-sparkling air,  
 That lent such colour to life's common grey  
 Is overshadowed,—suddenly am 'ware  
 Of a gleam lightening all my forward way ;  
 When, through the lapse of distance, falls a word  
 Radiant and cheering, and my heart is stirred  
 By the quick influence of that warm ray.  
 Let it shine oft : since, like a caged bird,  
 My heart sings only, when the sunbeams play.



## AN APOLOGUE.

**T**HREE Pilgrims once from Palestine were landed  
 Upon an island in the main storm-tost.  
 They, craving refuge, came not empty handed,  
 But in return, gave all they had not lost.  
 One planted firm his cross upon the granite ;  
 One dropt his anchor deep from shifting sands ;  
 And one, a heart so large he scarce could span it,  
 Charged with men's sorrows, bore with loving hands.  
 Straight from the tomb of their dear Lord and Master  
 Those precious gifts, amid the storm and strife,  
 Fearing with them no shipwreck, no disaster,  
 They brought, to sweeten and ennoble life.  
 The first was Faith, with large eyes ever growing  
 More bright, the longer that they lifted be.  
 The second Hope, about whose feet was flowing  
 A tide that bore bright things from far at sea.  
 The third was Charity, that well-belovèd one,  
 Who heals all wounds with his sweet tender lips,  
 And for the thorn, where'er he has removed one  
 Lays light a roseleaf with his finger-tips.  
 Faith, Hope, and Charity. If all else perish,  
 Grasp what we may of each, with eager hand,  
 Happy is he, who those three gifts can cherish,  
 Brought by the Pilgrims from the Holy Land !

## TWO MISTRESSES.

SHE wore a yellow gown, with filagrees ;  
 I watched her swarthy cheek, that sudden flushed  
 And sudden, ghastly deadened, with the thrust  
 His rapier-wit sent through her, to the lees

Of her heart's blood. He strokes his beard, and twirls  
 His pourpoint's tassel, as he turns to speak  
 To a ripe beauty, with a Rubens cheek,  
 And large white bosom overlaid with pearls,

Seated beside him on the flowery green,  
 Who whispers in his ear some amorous staves,  
 And through gold rivers of whose hair he laves  
 His fingers, laughing at the other's spleen.

\* \* \* \* \*

In the first grey of dawn, a figure stands,  
 And draws aside the damask of his bed . . .  
 Then to the fountain with a stealthy tread.—  
 The fishes sickened where she washed her hands.



## POPPIES.

“On one side is a field of drooping oats,  
Through which the poppies show their scarlet coats,  
So pert and useless, that they call to mind  
The scarlet coats that pester human kind.”—KEATS.

NOTHING is useless. Do not scorn  
These poppies of the field :  
Who thinks a space will not despise  
Their blushful cheeks and downcast eyes,  
Remembering all they yield.

The life-blood of the golden land,  
They greet the passer by :  
Flushing, with ev'ry wind that's born,  
The heaving bosom of the corn,  
Under the summer sky.

Ah ! fitting is it ye should grow  
Beside the “staff of life,”—  
The one our strength from day to day,  
The other a pow'r to smooth away  
All human care and strife !

When on some fevered bed, perchance,  
The corn will not avail,

Nor wine, nor any potions deep,  
To call one little hour of sleep  
Over the eyelids pale ;

'Tis then those "useless scarlet coats"  
(Like some of human kind)  
Prove their strong hearts can soothe distress,  
For all they wear a gaudy dress,  
That flutters in the wind.

Their sun-dried leaves have not in vain  
Outlived the harvest-day,  
If life has gained one hour of peace—  
If troubles for a moment cease—  
Under the Poppy's sway.



## A DREAM OF PARADISE.

A VISION rose before my eyes,  
 As I sat musing on this life,  
 (Its good and ill, its joy and strife,)  
 Of what should be in Paradise.

I saw two souls that, until then,  
 Had been divided ; hand in hand,  
 In golden day at last they stand,  
 Clear from the doubts of scornful men.

They look into each other's eyes,  
 With sense of perfect peace at last,  
 Made dearer for Life's sorrows past,—  
 Thus shall it be in Paradise.

Where fruit and flower together grow,  
 Where all is ripe, and no decay,  
 Where the birds warble through the day,  
 And singingly the waters flow.

Where good that here hath feebly blown  
 Shall, 'neath that sun, expand its leaves,  
 And Angels bind it into sheaves,  
 The evil withering, unknown.

For Love, that lights men up to Heaven,  
Love, is the sun that rules that day,  
In whose name tears are wiped away,  
In whose name all sins are forgiven.

The vision this, before my eyes ;  
The reign of what on earth was good ;  
Where nothing is misunderstood,—  
Thus shall it be in Paradise.



## LOVE IS OUT OF TOWN.

## I.

I WALKED this morning through the silent square,  
And looked up at the house I love so well,  
Two cats crept through the area-railing there,  
The milkman passed, and did not ring the bell.  
The frail policeman gave no side-glance down.  
He passed as I did—Love is out of Town!

## II.

All the dear windows of that house are dark,  
The door is bolted, and her pug is still.  
No chimney's smoke tells of a human spark  
To light and feed a fire. Upon the sill  
Lobelias sown in May look sere and brown:  
—All things declare that Love is out of Town!



## IN THE HOF-GARTEN.

A FRAGMENT FROM A PLAY.

*Baron.*

I AM from Würzburg, her old home, you know,  
 And being here, would fain behold her face,  
 Gracious as summer-rain to dry old hearts.  
 Like mine! But in an hour, the Prince's audience done,  
 We ride, from hence, for Ratisbon. I fear  
 Mine eyes shall not be gladdened, Count Rudolf,  
 With sight of your young Duchess?

*Count Rudolf.*

She was here

A minute since. . . . The musk of velvet robes  
 Clings yet, methinks, along this colonnade. . . .  
 That fallen rose-leaf on the marble step  
 Marks where she passed—yes; look you! there she  
 stands  
 Leaning against the balustrade.

*Baron.*

So—so—

She looks less bright, methinks. . . . Time works that  
 change. . . .

(Two years come Martinmass, since she was wed?)  
 But fairer, fuller blown, and statelier,  
 Becoming station and apparel. . . . Who  
 Are they who stand aloof, and yet so near?  
 Wanting, methinks, in courtliness, to leave  
 Their Duchess thus.

*Count.* It is the Duke himself,  
With Countess Arnheim.

*Baron.* Ha ! the Duke himself ?  
A likely-looking man, well-limbed, erect :  
Yet time to *him*, perhaps, might something add  
Of mental vigour. . . . Eh ? . . . . The face is weak ;  
Drawn with too soft a brush—but he is young—  
Who is this Countess Arnheim ?

*Count.* If you mean  
Her birth, 'tis dubious : her rank, you hear :  
Her wit, her talent, is the talk of all  
Since she appeared at Court.

*Baron.* Humph ! how long since ?  
Her wit, like Charity, hath much to hide.  
She is ill-favoured.

*Count.* Wait till you have speech  
With her. Not three months is it since she came,  
And yet already half the men are mad  
About her.

*Baron.* Doth the Duchess much affect  
Her company ?

*Count.* Well . . . Yes . . . I scarce can say . . .  
I think so. She diverts the Duke's dull hours,  
Hath a sweet trick of singing—nay, of late,  
I note that in the fashion of her coif  
And farthingale, the Duchess copies all  
That Countess Arnheim wears.

*Baron (after a pause).* Tell me, my friend—  
Though now I push my question to the verge  
Of indiscretion—Is the Duchess held  
A happy woman ? Happy, as the wife

Of some poor peasant is, upon a rood  
Of land, whose wishes never further stray ?

*Count.* Nay, Baron, was it not a marriage made,  
As royal marriages so seldom are—  
Firstly, for love, and only afterwards  
Approved of by the State? Rarely is lot  
So blest in sov'reign station as should be  
That of our Duke and Duchess.

*Baron.* You evade  
The question, ne'ertheless. Not what *should* be,  
But what *is*, I desire to know. She looks  
Like one in whom the light of youth hath died  
Out suddenly.

*Count.* I hope not so.

*Baron.* Confess,  
Do you not mark a difference, since first  
She came? Think! only twenty-two! 'Tis soon  
To wear that listless, court-begotten air!

*Count.* Baron, you drive me hard. . . . I live at  
Court,  
And should *not* see, that which were best unseen . . .  
There *is* a change, I cannot but deplore,  
Noting no element from her life withdrawn—  
No shock of fate—no sudden grief to cause  
The alteration. But from Nature's face  
We learn how trifles imperceptible  
Have large result. . . . Between yon sycamores,  
Look at the lake there. Scarce a minute since,  
It bore the perfect image of the sky,  
Upon its bosom: every golden moss  
Along its bank, and lichen's pale-green hair

On the down-bending branch was mirrored clear :  
 And now—the change ! A breath of air—a drift  
 Of fleecy vapour o'er the blue,—no more,  
 And lo ! the lake's untroubled sympathy  
 With the bright day above, is gone. A cold  
 Grey ripple, like an empty laughter, breaks  
 The tranquil trust wherein it lay, and smiled. . . .  
 Such change there is in the young Duchess.

*Baron.*

*Doth*

Your parable imply that o'er the face  
 Of what was once her Heaven,—a husband's love,—  
 A cloud hath blown already?

*Count.*

God forbid !

I think,—nay, I am sure, the Duke *doth* love  
 His wife : but women sometimes entertain  
 Hopes of eternal honeymoons, which few  
 Have ever realized. It may be this :  
 It may be that the Duke, like many men,  
 In the security of "home" and "wife,"  
 Finds peace indeed, yet still unsatisfied,  
 That lack of something to excite and stir  
 The sluggish blood, at Court (our wars being done),  
 Where men must needs spend stratagem on chess,  
 And try their strength on tennis, or at ball !

*Baron.* And waste their wit on women,—*not their wives.*

I understand. The drift of your remark  
 Touches me nearly. I had rather see  
 This brodered Duchess back again, a girl  
 Stepping to Mass in modest stuffs, beside  
 Her aged mother (the Princess, you know,

Was fall'n from royal fortunes when the Duke  
First met her daughter)—I had rather see  
Her back, I say, in Würzburg,—exiled—poor,  
But where each burgher blessed her, like the sun,  
For shining on him, as she passed,—than here,  
More lonely far, in all the gold brocades  
Of court, where riot is so loud, that hearts,  
Though side by side, hear not each other beat !  
As to your *Countess Arnheims*,—one and all,  
They should be——

*Count.*           ——Baron ! not alone the walls  
But trees and flowers have ears ! 'Tis dangerous  
To breathe with disrespect a lady's name.  
We are at Court ! But you, on your return,  
If you should speak of us, bear this in mind ;  
The Duchess, being a woman, hath her share  
Of thorns and roses : being a good one, she  
Will try and put the thorns aside, in time ;  
Taking the roses only to her heart. . . .  
They come this way—'twere well that we retire.



## TWO VIEWS OF A CHARACTER.

*Herbert.*

H E is a hypocrite . . . .

*Max.* I think it not—

I do believe that you misjudge him, taking  
 Your side-view of the man to be the whole  
 Completed truth : just so, a mountain shows  
 One aspect to the North, one to the South ;  
 Jagged and peaked to one, and to the other  
 All curves and slopes. The man is many-sided,  
 Not false, I say.

*Herbert.* Pah ! doesn't he sing psalms,  
 And pass with half the women for a Saint,  
 And talk his vaporous sentiment, the while  
 He's no whit better than his neighbours, Max ?  
 If that's not *cant*, forgive me ! Don't wash in  
 The sky of your celestial charity,  
 Old Boy, so thick that every edge is lost  
 And outline blurred.

*Max.* Herbert, the real sky  
 Lights all, and colours, softening all the lines ;  
 Remember this. If our weak copy strives  
 To blend and reconcile in our finite view  
 Of others what seems faulty, let us take  
 Revenge in clear sharp sunlight on ourselves  
 In the known foreground. Think how oft our  
 thoughts—

Our secret thoughts, if not our open acts—  
To-day give lie to yesterdays and to-morrows !  
Of all the seed the Sower dropped, what fell  
By the road-side, I think, fell thickest. Birds  
I' the air for ever hover round us, eager  
To snatch the good seed as it falls. And if  
The lower nature of this man forswears  
At times the nobler part, as I believe,  
He is but human. Peter thrice denied  
His Master ; and God's chosen Shepherd-King  
Was stained with shameful sin. Yet none, I think,  
Hold these for hypocrites.

*Herbert.*

Now you confound

Two things—or else you are a Jesuit, Max.  
An upright man may fall, being tempted—well,  
None know their strength, alas ! but far from this,  
Are the habitual double-lives that, like  
Panels we wot of, painted for the world  
With Godly Saints, show, when reversed, a lewd  
And devilish riot.

*Max (after a pause).* There are such, I know ;

But oftener, far oftener, I believe,  
Do lives resemble pictures that we judge  
Not as complete, but in their several parts ;  
Saying, “ Well done ! ” to this—turning our eyes  
From that uncared-for corner—finding them  
But inconsistent, ill-accomplished wholes,  
Yet not all worthless. . . . Ah ! Believe me, Truth  
To our own hearts is rarer than to men,  
So much the larger part of self lies hid  
From all save God.

## WINFRED'S HAIR.

WINFRED, waking in the morning,  
 Locks dishevelled, sighed, "Alas !  
 Broken is the Venice-bodkin  
 That you gave me—'twas of glass.  
 All my auburn hair, henceforward,  
 Shall be given to the wind."  
 —Ere the evening came, another's  
 Net of pearls her hair confined.

Fragile as the Venice-bauble  
 I had thrust in Winfred's hair,  
 Soon the pearl-net snapped asunder  
 Other hands had fastened there ;  
 Ere the moon's wide-blossomed petals  
 On the breast of night had died,  
 (Net and bodkin both discarded,)  
 Winfred's glittering hair flowed wide !

Silver comb and silken fillet  
 Next, in turn, the wild hair bound,  
 Till, at length, the crown of wifehood  
 Clasped itself that hair around.  
 Golden crown of Love ! displacing  
 Girlhood's vain adornments there ;  
 Winfred never more shall alter,  
 Now, the fashion of her hair.

## A SCANDINAVIAN LEGEND.

A LITTLE water-spirit all day long  
 Sat singing on the stream. The fisher heard  
 And smiled to hear that sweet voice, as it stirred  
 The reeds and rushes with its trustful song.  
 "I hope, O I hope," that burthen ever grew,  
 "That the Redeemer of mankind will save *me* too!"

A stern, hard priest who rode along that way,  
 Wrapt in a mantle of self-righteous zeal,  
 Felt his wrath kindle at the soft appeal,  
 That formed the burthen of that trustful lay.  
 "I hope, O I hope," burst from those lips anew,  
 "That the Redeemer of mankind will save me too!"

There sat the little Spirit on the wave,  
 As the priest turning on his saddle, cried,  
 "Cease, cease that clamour, the Redeemer died  
 The souls of men—not such as thee—to save.  
 As soon shall blossoms this bare twig unfold  
 As thou, Salvation, impious sprite, behold!"

With that same twig, his lazy mule he smote,  
 And the poor Spirit's cry of sharp despair  
 At those fell words rang on the silent air,  
 As he sank down, too helpless now to float.

But lo! the priest's mule scarce ten paces bore him,  
Ere the dry twig burst out in bloom before him!

Struck with remorse and shame, the salt tears ran  
Down the hard face of that repentant man;  
And turning back, his humbled head he bowed  
Before God's throne of grace: then cried aloud,  
"See, sinful man, the twig *has* bloomed, to prove  
That God's love worketh in no narrow groove!  
Thy soul, thou little Spirit, saved shall be—  
Pray thou that Christ like mercy show to me."

And all that night, when trembling moonlight wakes  
The shadowy water with its silver strings,  
The fishers hear the little voice that sings  
Louder than ever, till its burthen breaks;  
"I hope, yea, I hope—my hope I now renew,  
That the Redeemer of mankind will save *me* too."



## SYMPATHY.

WE are as Harps, that vibrate to a touch  
 From stranger hands, unconscious of the strings;  
 While the soul's slumbering echoes wake to life,  
 And through its halls responsive music rings.

Few are the Davids to these Harps of ours!  
 Few learn the cunning of the instrument:  
 And those to whom the gift has been denied  
 Are oftenest those with whom our lives are spent.

But God's large gift of Love is showered around.  
 Let us be thankful. Earth were too like Heaven,  
 If, with the power of loving deep and long,  
 That other gift of Sympathy were given!



## TO A SIREN.

“O MERMAID, Mermaid, underneath the sea,  
 Luring to death the sailors with thy strain,  
 The day is gone when thou could'st capture me,  
 Pass on: thy music here is spent in vain!”  
 —Thus my heart sang when I beheld her face,  
 After the lapse of many changeful years,  
 And I refused to bow before the grace  
 That cost me once so many bitter tears.

“O Mermaid, Mermaid, on thy coral strand  
 Lies many a gallant heart for thee who died,  
 And no tear dims the mirror in thy hand!  
 Pass on—pass on”—in bitterness I cried.  
 Time had not touched her beauty: she was gay;  
 No pity lingered round her harp's sweet strings;  
 And I rejoiced that I had broke away,—  
 That now in vain for me the Siren sings.



## THEN AND NOW.

HE and I in the twilight,  
 I mind it well—ah me!  
 His wild despair, the cry of his heart,  
 In its hopeless misery.

Crushed as a flower is crushed  
 In a shut-down book, his soul,  
 That hour, ta'en out of a summer's day,  
 Had lost all self-control.

The book was a heavy anguish,  
 Closed on a living man:  
 We may slowly learn to unclasp the book,—  
 Unfold the flower, who can?

Was this the friend I knew,  
 Who smiled at love, in scorn?  
 And all because that a worthless woman  
 Died here yesterday morn!

Yet she no more deceived him,  
 With the guile of her pouting kiss.  
 God! that such precious oil should be poured  
 Into vessel as vile as this!

No—she no more deceived him:  
The worth of her soul he had found:  
But, as ivy will smother the strongest oak,  
Her being round his was wound.

And not when the axe first severed  
The roots that had sapped his youth,  
Did he break from the coil of that noxious weed—  
Did his soul confess the truth.

And this the cry that he uttered,  
As he hid his face in the bed,  
Where she, with her wealth of golden hair  
About her, was lying dead:

“Gone from me! gone for ever!  
All prayer in vain—in vain!  
And I who would give my hopes of Heaven  
To call her back again!

“O, how I loved that woman!  
Many and many a night  
Have I covered with kisses those little feet,  
Clasped in my fingers tight.

“I had no power to hold her  
Close enough, as it seemed,  
When that head with its gold abundance bowed,  
Between my brown arms gleamed.

"I watched her fringed eyelids,  
And listened, hour by hour,  
As the soft and regular breathing rose  
From her mouth's half-open flower.

"The snow lay round our hut, friend,  
But *she* never felt the cold,  
And now, O God! 'tis in vain my arms  
Her icy limbs enfold.

"You point to those Dresden letters,  
To the lock of that Saxon's hair,  
I do not forget—but forgive—poor child!  
—She was mad when we were there.

"She was mad—yet I think she loved me,  
When we dwelt by the happy Rhine,—  
That autumn among the Styrian lakes—  
That spring in the Apennine.

"And now the summer's come round,  
In Florence my darling must die;  
She was with me but twelve short months; yet here  
My Past and my Future lie.

"Why was she taken from me?  
Friend, did I ever complain?  
I loved her, with all her hundred sins,  
As I never can love again.

“Cruel, to her so young—  
Cruel, the summons sent;  
In all the splendour and heat of youth,  
And without the time to repent!

“In darkness, O God! I cry,  
Since the light of my life is flown,  
Since the woman I loved is dead—take me,  
For I cannot walk alone!”

These the passionate words  
That broke from his wild despair.  
I never saw him again, till ten  
Long years had blanched his hair.

But 'tis thus that I recall him  
In that twilight, years ago;  
Without, earth's darkness gathering round—  
Within, heart-ruin and woe.

---

God willed that out of that ruin  
A better man should rise,  
In whom the flesh was subjected  
To a spirit, pure and wise.

As the cataract over a rapid  
Becomes a river of strength,  
The current of that mad life flowed calm;  
His heart was God's at length.

All the impetuous love  
 He had poured, in youth, on the shrine  
 Of an earthly Idol now was laid  
 At the feet of Love Divine.

As a cup, that in feverish joy  
 Is drained on a festal day,  
 May be sanctified to contain the Blood  
 That washeth all sin away;

As we choose the self-same metal  
 To shield our ships, and assail;  
 As the same words, uttered for good or for ill,  
 For good or for ill prevail;

So with those Human weapons  
 Chosen to fight God's fight,  
 They are never passionless, luke-warm lives,  
 But mighty for wrong, or right.

Perhaps they have sinned and suffered,  
 As this man did—I know  
 That from men too cold for the Devil to tempt  
 Saint Pauls can never grow!

Thus I think, as I look on him,  
 Of his heart's long-wasted love,  
 And how, through waters of bitterness, God  
 Hath drawn that heart above.

I see how men bless his coming,  
How they grieve when he departs:  
The secret of bruised spirits hath he,  
And a balm for wounded hearts.

He cheers all them who suffer,  
He lifts all them who fall;  
By temptation and sin, long years ago,  
He hath sympathy with all.

As I look at him, I repeat  
All worketh to God's wise end;  
Perhaps without that passionate love,  
He had not been here, my friend.

Perhaps he might have been harder,  
From a height of untempted strength—  
He was Passion's slave for a season,  
Is the servant of God, at length!



## THE ITALIAN BEGGAR-BOY.

“**A** FOREIGN vagabond and his ape,  
 Begging the bread away  
 From honest English children,  
 Who are hard at work all day,—  
 You'll have never a penny of mine, indeed!”  
 I heard the good wife say.

I looked and lo! a swarthy child,  
 With piteous hollow eyes,  
 His monkey was his only friend,  
 And almost half his size.  
 A vagabond life? Well, so it is,  
 And they who work are wise.

And we who preach these saws are wise!  
 Jacko in red and gold  
 Held up his cap—I blushed to think  
 My sixpence would uphold  
 In luxury's lap, the man to whom  
 The little child was sold.

And then I questioned him, and learned  
 Of the hard and pinching ways  
 That young life was acquainted with,  
 In its weary tramp, to raise

Enough to pay for a bed and crusts,  
From the master of his days :

And how he oft on steps at night  
His weary limbs would throw,  
Not daring, penniless, to meet  
His wage of curse and blow.  
*Such* idleness, 'faith ! is harder work,  
Than factory children know !

So friendless, ignorant, debased,  
Without a single bond  
To raise him, through a human love,  
Unto the life beyond—  
Almost tempted to seek for rest  
In the heart of the first black pond !

I thought how children, mean as he,  
For whom some mother strives  
To lead them, through the fear of God,  
To follow upright lives,  
Were blessed : for through the rankest tares  
That grain of good survives.

I thought how he too once lay warm,  
In the light of Love divine,  
As he hung on his sunburnt mother's breast,  
Under a Tuscan vine.  
From her grave on the hill, could she now behold  
How all light had ceased to shine !

I thought how bad the best of men  
Might have been if that light had fled !  
“Vagabond lives are loveless ones ;  
I pity all such,” I said.  
“In the name of her who bore thee, child,  
Here is a loaf of bread.”



## PLANETS.

THE stars shoot from us as we gaze, and bear  
 Their little lights from our dark world away ;  
 The many twinkling pleasures of the day  
 Fade into night, and leave us all unblest ;  
 But the great planets burn unchanging there,  
 And the true glories of our life we wear,  
 Like jewels on our breast.

Nothing can rob us of them : ours they are,  
 When God hath said, " Let there be light within,"  
 And while our earth-lamps fail us, and the din  
 Of this dark world grows distant in our ears,  
 We are led onward by our jewel-star,  
 As Shepherds once were guided from afar,  
 To the low-cradled promise of past years !



## RETROSPECTION.

THE only sorrows that endure are those  
 Of our own building ; roof'd in with remorse.  
 For loss of friends, of health, of riches, fame,  
 Why, look you, Time shall reconcile us all  
 To each of these, until we haply grow  
 To count each loss, a gain ; but only this,  
 The conscious loss of something in ourselves,  
 Unseen, but lessening surely day by day,  
 (As though a well should feel the water-spring  
 Drying up slowly in its heart)—the years  
 Do not assuage this ill. Our own old selves  
 Down the long avenue of Life we see,  
 And the pale phantoms of what might have been  
 Lining the road on either side : we mark  
 The early promise unfulfill'd ; the corn—  
 Some field half-cut, and some unripen'd still ;—  
 Our figs and vines unpruned and profitless ;  
 The flowers—Ah me !—the flowers that we bound  
 In sheaves at morn, have wither'd in mid-day !  
 And Hope, and Faith, and Singleness of Heart  
 Have dropp'd like those fair petals, one by one,  
 Under the world's hot breath. Is it not so ?  
 " Turn not thine eyes behind," the preacher saith,  
 " Nor long, like Lot's wife, for the things that were."  
 If every day were as the smoke that fades,

Leaving no trace behind, this might be so ;  
But men whose lives are more than gibe and jeer  
Feel how each hour is laden with its seed,  
And that God marks the harvest. Unto such  
Oblivion can never come. To mourn  
With manly sorrow for his past, unfits  
No earnest man to win his future way.



## IN MEMORIAM.

MEN say, when saints are carried to the grave,  
 “Rejoice, for they have join’d that heavenly  
     throng,  
 To which in life their faithful spirits gave  
     Sure pledges to belong.”

I say not so. Salt of the earth are they,  
 Lent us to savour life’s too bitter food ;—  
 To help us forward on the thorny way :—  
     —Weep only for the good !

For weaker spirits, wasted in life’s wear,  
 Be glad, when God hath laid within the ground  
 Burthens they were not strong enough to bear.  
     —His mercy doth abound !

His mercy doth abound ; for He hath seen,  
 And judged, by other than our human laws,  
 The movements of this intricate machine,—  
     —Each hidden physical cause.

By early taint or heritage, have we  
 Follow’d, it may be, at the tempter’s call.  
 Man sees these things as in a glass, but He,  
     Our Father knoweth all.

Therefore weep not that this our loved one lies  
Deaf to our voice, and colourless, and cold,  
That never more shall he unveil his eyes,  
Nor his clasp'd hands unfold.

Never, until that day, when, under Heaven,  
He and the Judge of men meet face to face;  
And all his sins be known,—and be forgiven,  
Through His abounding grace !

For that he died repentant of his sins,  
Thankful, and humble, with his latest breath,  
And that we know the truer life begins,  
When this is closed in death.

Let us rejoice then ; he has reach'd his goal ;  
For surely he is better hid away,  
Where earth's corruption cannot touch the soul,  
But only the vile clay :

The clay that held, in sorrow and in strife,  
The better part of our beloved, we know ;  
God, in His wisdom, cut the thread of life,—  
—Yes ! it is better so.



## BY THE SEA.

O COME, Love, to the yellow sand,  
 Now in the sunny morning weather,  
 There heart by heart, and hand in hand,  
 The impress of our feet shall stand  
 One little hour together.

The sea, yon distant bar along,  
 Is moaning, like a heart in pain ;  
 But rising, as a giant strong,  
 Soon shall the burthen of his song  
 Break on the shore again.

“Oblivion” is that burthen grand,  
 For ages, Love, unchanging still ;  
 While reaching out a wrinkled hand,  
 He clean effaces from the sand  
 Our names,—as Time soon will !

Nor Time nor tide, Love, hath control  
 Our hearts this little hour to sever ;  
 Tho’ waves may rise,—while the years roll,  
 Its memory stands within each soul,  
 As on a rock,—for ever !

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